

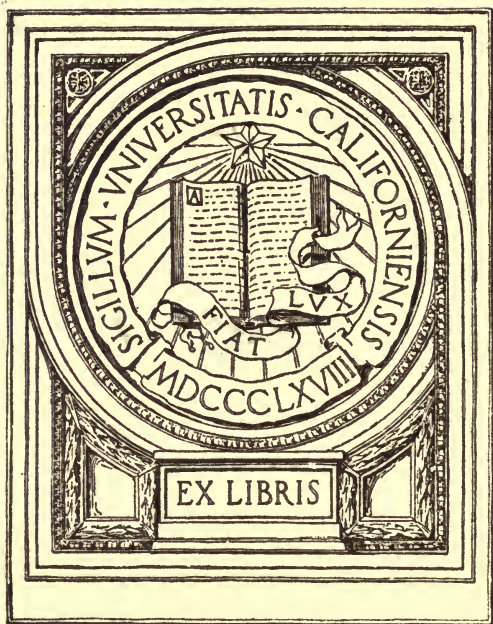




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REVIEW  
OF  
THE MEXICAN WAR,  
EMBRACING  
THE CAUSES OF THE WAR,  
THE  
RESPONSIBILITY OF ITS COMMENCEMENT,  
THE  
PURPOSES OF THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT IN ITS PROSECUTION,  
ITS BENEFITS AND ITS EVILS.

BY CHARLES T. PORTER.

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## P R E F A C E.

IT is the object of this essay to exhibit the true character of the war in which our country has lately been engaged. It aims to present in a clear and concise manner the facts and considerations which will enable the reader to form a correct opinion concerning the causes of this contest, and the motives and the excuses for its prosecution.

It is its further design to give a view of the consequences of the war; to examine the benefits which have been attributed to it, and the evils, near and remote, of which it has been the cause; to present the duty and the true glory and ambition of the United States; and to point out the manner in which alone peace can be established among civilized nations.

It contains no allusion to political parties. It is no part of its object to inquire what share belongs to each of the glory or the shame of this war. The subject of slavery it has been the endeavor of the author to avoid. The belief that the acquisition of territory for the sole purpose of extending and perpetuating slavery has been the undivided purpose of our government and people for twenty-five years; that for this Texas was settled; that urged by this motive alone, our citizens flew to the assistance of that State in her efforts to establish her independence, and government winked at their participation in her struggle; that for this alone Texas was annexed: that for this alone war was undertaken; that government would never have sought this contest, had it apprehended that any portion of the territory which it desired would ever be secured to freedom; this belief is one to which he cannot subscribe.

It cannot be proven that the war had any necessary connection with slavery. Annexation certainly was not its cause ; it only furnished an occasion for it. The circumstances, so far as they are yet known, seem best to warrant the belief that it was waged for the acquisition of territory, irrespective of the character which after legislation might impress upon that territory. It was sustained alike by the north and the south. The spirit which impelled to it was confined to no section of the country. The north rivalled the south in greediness after the possessions of another, and in causeless vindictiveness toward a weak and distracted nation.

The war is here considered as an act, the responsibility of which rests upon the people of the United States, the whole people, the mass of whom, without distinction of section or of party, either aided in its commencement or sympathized with its objects and united in its prosecution.

The work must stand or fall, according to its own merits. If the views advanced in it are sound, and its arguments have weight, it will probably make its way ; if not, it must suffer the consequences. If it is worthy of being read, it doubtless will be ; if it is unworthy, it will be unfortunate for the publisher.

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# REVIEW OF THE MEXICAN WAR.

## CHAPTER I.

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INTRODUCTION. Annexation of Texas. The occasion of the War. Influences which led to annexation. Geographical Unity. Political sympathy. Desire of the South to increase her weight in the Union. Fear of British encroachment. Supposed military advantages of Texas. The resolution of Congress.

THE war with Mexico has become matter of history. The excitement inseparable from contention, which few minds are able to resist, has passed away; and calm reflection comes, as is too usual in human affairs, after the action which it should have preceded.

We intend in the following pages to present a review of this war, in which it shall be our aim to state historical facts with accuracy, and to examine them by the principles of christianity and an enlightened statesmanship. We shall take a full survey of the causes which led to

this contest, and point out the means which should have been adopted by our government to prevent it. We shall examine its objects, as well as its benefits and evils, both immediate and remote, and shall endeavor to explain the human agencies which may be employed to hasten the time when nations shall learn war no more. And may the minds of our countrymen be so seriously led to the consideration of this event, that its history shall be an instruction and a warning to us and to our children forever.

The annexation of Texas to the United States must be regarded as the primary occasion of the war, since had that measure not been adopted the circumstances out of which the war arose could never have existed. Viewing it in this light, we shall, before proceeding to those events which were the more immediate causes of the contest, devote a few pages to its examination.

The influences which led to annexation were numerous and varied. The impression had become general among our citizens that the United States, by the treaty of 1819, surrendered to Spain a part of the western valley of the Mississippi, and a strong desire existed to recover it. This desire arose in part from the

fact that the country was contiguous to our own, and was separated from us by no natural boundary, as well as from its commercial advantages, the mildness of its climate, and the fertility of its soil. It originated partly, also, in an ambition for the undivided ownership of that vast region whose waters uniting in the Mississippi declare its geographical unity. The inhabitants of Texas were mostly emigrants from the United States.

There appeared, also, other considerations, some of a general, others of a sectional nature, by which the country was then strongly agitated, and the effect of which, undoubtedly, was to hasten annexation. The southern states generally advocated the immediate adoption of the measure for two reasons. The slaveholding and planting interest was in the minority in congress. The admission of two new northern states was anticipated, and the acquisition of Texas would tend to equalize northern and southern representation, especially in the senate. They insisted, moreover, and at the time it was generally believed, that it was the design of England to procure the abolition of slavery in Texas, and that object effected, to undermine the institution in this country. It



was declared, that with them the question of annexation was one of self-preservation. The ultimate design of Great Britain many apprehended to be no less than to establish her own authority in Texas, or at least to form an alliance offensive and defensive with that state; and it was urged, that were the union again refused, a wide door would be opened for her success; that not only might we lose Texas forever, but California and the future commerce of the Pacific, which that power was thought to aim at, might fall into her possession.

It was still further contended that the immediate possession of Texas was necessary to our future national safety; that it would constitute a bulwark against foreign invasion; and that if refused now, when offered to our acceptance, it might be desired by us in vain in an hour of emergency.

The effect of these arguments on the popular mind was doubtless heightened by the very uncertainty in which they were wrapped, and the apparent urgency perhaps caused many objections to the measure to be lightly considered which under ordinary circumstances might for the time have caused its rejection.



In February, 1845, congress by joint resolution consented "that the territory properly included within and rightfully belonging to the republic of Texas be erected into a state" on certain conditions, one of which was, that it should be "subject to the adjustment by this government of all questions of boundary that may arise with other governments." The terms of annexation having been accepted by Texas, congress in December following declared, "that the state of Texas shall be one, and is hereby declared to be one of the United States of America."

## CHAPTER II.

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ANNEXATION continued. Justness of the act toward Mexico. The right of Mexico to sovereignty over Texas. If possessed at all after her revolution of 1834-'35, lost afterwards by her neglect to enforce it. Her claim in effect abandoned. Texas became independent of right by the Mexican revolution of 1834-'35. Expediency of annexation. Annexation to be considered here only so far as it effected our relations with Mexico.

IN considering this act of our government, the question first arises, was the measure just toward Mexico. That republic contended that Texas was an integral part of her territory, a rebellious province which she intended to subdue; and she denounced the annexation as a violation by the United States of their neutrality and treaty stipulations, as a national robbery, and as one of the greatest outrages recorded in history.

We believe that this claim and charge were entirely without foundation; that in this proceeding the United States did not violate their neutrality or their treaty, nor interfere in the least with any right of Mexico. This we shall endeavor to show.

The common consent of mankind has fixed a limitation to national claims, and assigned a period to the right of re-conquest. It has become a law of nations, that if a claim of sovereignty is not prosecuted with adequate means, and within a reasonable period, the government asserting it must suffer the consequences of its inaction. Other nations have a right to regard its pretension as abandoned, and to consider any subsequent attempt to enforce it as a wrongful invasion. Mexico herself furnishes an illustration in point. Spain refused to acknowledge her independence for more than fifteen years after its establishment. She protested against its recognition by other powers, declaring her determination to re-conquer her lost possessions. But the world treated her in all respects as independent *de jure*, and the United States in 1825, '27 and '29, considered her competent to convey a perfect title to Texas. The last was thought to be a favorable occasion to renew the offer for the purchase of that territory, as Mexico would need the purchase money in resisting "the Spanish invasion."

Let us apply this well-established principle to the present case. At the time of the annexation Texas had been independent of Mex.

ico for nine years. Her independence had been recognized by the United States, England, France, Belgium, and Holland. Mexico had protested against these acts, had declared her determination to re-conquer that state, and had waged, on paper, a furious war against it. But, with a single exception, Texas remained all that time in undisturbed tranquility, doing "all those acts and things which independent states may of right do," attracting by her equal laws, her genial climate and fertile soil emigrants from all parts of the world, developing her resources, and increasing in strength and stability.

The exception to which we have alluded occurred in the year 1842, when Mexico sent three marauding expeditions into Texas to pillage her defenceless border settlements. The first party of seven hundred took the village of San Antonio. The second, numbering about eight hundred, attacking a company of some two hundred emigrants, were defeated and driven out of the country. The third, a motley collection of nearly thirteen hundred men, took San Antonio a second time by surprise. Pursued by a small body of Texans under General Somerville, they hastily retreated, car-

rying away, however, the judges and attendants of the court then in session, with other unarmed and peaceful citizens into captivity. After the battle of San Jacinto, these three barbarous, plundering expeditions, not one of which remained in the country longer than eight days, were the only hostile attacks which Mexico had made on the territory of Texas.

Our secretary of state, Mr. Webster, says in 1842: "From the battle of San Jacinto the war was at an end." "Mexico may choose to consider Texas as a rebellious province, but the world has been obliged to take a very different view of the matter." "Texas has exhibited the same external signs of national independence as Mexico herself." "Practically free and independent, acknowledged as a political sovereignty by the principal powers of the world, no hostile foot finding rest within her territory for six or seven years, and Mexico herself refraining for all that period from any further attempt to re-establish her own authority, the United States must consider Texas as an independent sovereignty as much as Mexico." "How long, let it be asked, in the judgment of Mexico herself," he inquires, "is the fact of actual independence to be held



of no avail against an avowed purpose of future re-conquest?"

Three years of continued inaction had succeeded the six or seven to which Mr. Webster alludes. For nine successive years, then, Mexico had not made a single attempt to establish her claim; for the incursions before described were entirely inadequate and useless, and evidently not designed as attempts to effect any such object. They cannot be allowed to have had any higher purpose than injury and plunder. Certainly, if the claim of Mexico could not then be considered as abandoned, and the rightful independence of Texas as established, it would be very difficult to say at what period such a judgment would have been warranted.

All publicists agree, that a nation's right to lost possessions ceases when all probable hope of recovery is at an end. And this is a reasonable and just rule; because the rights of individuals and states cannot be suffered to remain suspended, while an unreasonable nation persists in indulging its spleen, and in exhibiting its obstinacy. Now Mexico was notoriously unable to re-conquer Texas. She was asserting a claim, the enforcement of which, always hopeless, had grown for nine years more

and more manifestly impossible. An obligation rests upon all nations to enforce, or to abandon their claims of sovereignty. The right to re-assert them does not descend, as Mexico contended, to children and children's children. A claim, as our secretary of state, Mr. Upsher, very justly declared, must be enforced seasonably, or abandoned for the peace and commerce of the rest of the world. The history of Europe presents several instances in which her states have united to compel obedience to this just rule. England, at that time the greatest power in the world, recognized this obligation, and after vainly endeavoring to reduce the American colonies to submission, when she saw that the attempt was hopeless, immediately acknowledged them to be free and independent. But Mexico sat like the dog in the manger, and it was the right, nay, it was the duty of all nations to disregard her threatening and her claims. Moreover, by an express act she acknowledged this obligation, in consenting to recognize the independence of Texas, if the latter would stipulate not to become annexed to the United States. Now in view of these plain facts, to what judgment can a candid



world arrive, except that at the time of the annexation Mexico had forfeited and lost any sovereignty over Texas which she might before have possessed.

But moreover, this claim of Mexico was in the beginning unfounded and unjust. Texas, by the Mexican revolution of 1834-'35, became of right as well as in fact independent, and Mexico at that time, by her own act, lost her former sovereignty over her. On the establishment of the constitutional government in 1824, Texas, by a decree of the congress of Mexico, was united with Coahuila, as a "constituent and sovereign state of the Mexican confederacy."

The principles on which that union was founded appears not to differ in any essential particular from those of our own. The constitution declared the Mexican government to be a "popular, representative, federal republic." The powers of its congress, and the jurisdiction of its supreme court, were similar to those of the United States.

The constitution of Coahuila and Texas, sanctioned by the general government, declared that state to be "free and independent of the other Mexican states," and that the sovereign-

ty of the state resided "originally and essentially in the great mass of the individuals who compose it." That instrument also declared, that "in all matters relating to the Mexican confederacy, the state delegates its faculties and powers to the general congress; but in all that properly relates to the government of the state, it retains its liberty, independence and sovereignty."

In the year 1834, Santa Anna, then president of Mexico, at the head of the army, dissolved the federal congress, and abolished the council of government, whose authority he took into his own hands. A detachment of troops at the same time entered the territory of Texas, demanded the surrender of several of her principal citizens, and in accordance with a general order, attempted to disarm the inhabitants. The people of Texas resisted these demands, protected their fellow-citizens, and drove the army from their soil. They then published a manifesto, in which they declared that Santa Anna had broken the political compact of Mexico, that the government unconstitutionally established by that usurper had no authority over Texas, and that the people of that state were no longer morally

or civilly bound by the compact of union. They declared that they had taken up arms only to resist tyranny and to uphold the constitution, and that they were ready to assist the other Mexican states in re-establishing the republic.

It is plain that in this Santa Anna, and not Texas, rebelled against the government. There existed no difference between her obligation to defend that government and her own liberties against him, and her obligation to defend them against a foreign invader, intent upon their destruction.

In the following year Santa Anna, by a military edict, transformed the states into departments, and clothed the general government with the entire sovereignty. Many of the states declared against this outrage. Of these, some were reduced to obedience by force, and against others, from which a more formidable resistance was apprehended, the basest treachery was employed to effect their subjection.

Having at length secured a supremacy in the other states, Santa Anna dissolved the legislature of Coahuila and Texas at the point of the bayonet, and marched to the subjugation of the latter.

That state, after the overthrow of the government, the destruction of the federal constitution, and the final submission of the other states to the usurper, on the 2nd of March, 1836, declared herself independent, and in the following month established her declaration by overthrowing the Mexican army on the plains of San Jacinto and driving its wreck beyond her borders.

By this successful resistance against the revolution in Mexico, Texas preserved the sovereignty which she had possessed under the constitution, and of which Santa Anna had failed to deprive her, and regained that which she had delegated to the general congress, and thus became an independent sovereign state, in the fullest sense of that term. For the mere edict of Santa Anna was of no effect to take away her rights from Texas; she could loose them only by voluntary or necessary surrender. By the theory of the Mexican government all sovereignty resided originally in the people, and the general government possessed such powers and such only as the people by their constitution had granted to it. When the government which the people had instituted was destroyed, the depositary of this power no lon-

ger existing, the grant, which could not remain in abeyance, reverted to the people.

The government established by Santa Anna could not exercise rightful jurisdiction over Texas, for no competent authority had granted to it the power. The only restraint on the entire sovereignty of Texas was contained in the constitution of the United Mexican States. The binding force of that instrument having been destroyed, the only restraint upon her was gone, and she was by the usurping act of Santa Anna free and independent. Her declaration was only the announcement of a fact that existed without her agency, and which undeclared would have been no less a fact.

It will be observed that the revolution was not by Texas, but against her. Its object was to change her from an independent state to a province of a consolidated military power. If her independence had rested on the right of revolution, it would have existed subject for a time to the right of re-conquest. Her independence *de jure* would not be established until it had been acknowledged by her former government, or the right to re-conquer her had been lost by neglect. But she had never revolted. The revolution in Mexico, failing to



despoil her of the sovereignty which she possessed as a state of that confederacy, and destroying the only political restraint, the only superior government which she had before known, left her entirely free and sovereign.

It follows, then, that the invasion of Texas in 1836 was an attempt by a foreign tyrant to conquer an independent state, to subjugate a free people; and that the recognition of her independence by the government of Santa Anna, or its successors, was no more necessary to its completeness than would have been its acknowledgment by any other government which had never exercised sovereignty over her, and to which she had never owed allegiance.

From these considerations it follows, that the annexation of Texas to the United States was a measure which involved no right of Mexico, and which furnished to her no cause of complaint.

It is said that war existed between the two countries, and that by the annexation we assumed the war. It follows from what we have seen, that if Mexico had then renewed her war against Texas, it would have been an unjust invasion. However, then, the question should

have been considered in the light of expediency, it is clear that our duty to Mexico did not require us to refrain from the adoption of the measure because an unjust invasion by her might be apprehended. We arrive then at the conclusion that this act of our government was consistent with exact justice to Mexico.

But this is not the only view of the case which our subject presents. There arises in the consideration of this measure another question scarcely inferior in interest and importance: Was it the part of wisdom at that time to exercise this right which the United States possessed?

It does not belong to us in this essay, be it understood, to examine the domestic questions to which annexation gave rise, or to discuss the character of that measure as viewed in a domestic light. Its consideration lies within the province of this work only so far as it effected our relations with Mexico, and was the occasion of the war.

Was the annexation of Texas expedient and right, in view of the effects upon our relations with Mexico, which might reasonably have been apprehended from it? This is the only question which remains for us to examine; with



the propriety or impropriety of the measure in other respects we have here nothing to do.

We believe annexation at that time to have been in this respect inexpedient and wrong. It was certain that its tendency would be to alienate from us the good will of the Mexican people and government, to interrupt the harmony which should exist between the two republics, and to arouse illiberal and unfriendly feelings.

The boundary between Texas and Mexico was unsettled, and it was urged that by this act we should involve ourselves in a dispute with Mexico, which might be productive of difficulty, and perhaps of unhappy consequences. Experience has shown that this apprehension was too well founded. Moreover, Mexico had announced to the world that she should consider the proposed annexation a sufficient cause of war, and should fight for the maintenance of her rights. The probability that she would put her threat into execution, and actually undertake a war so unjust, so idle, and for the support of which she was so entirely destitute of resources, was certainly not very strong, but such an event was by no means impossible.

It would surely have been unwise for the United States to have adopted a measure from which consequences such as these might be apprehended, without an adequate reason. Did any such reason exist in this case? The many bonds of sympathy between our country and Texas; the unity of position, of people, of climate, of products, of interests, together with the political situation of the rest of the continent, rendered it evident that the question of annexation was one of time alone—that from the silent influence of natural causes that new-born republic must at some early day become a portion of our own. “As respects Texas,” said Mr. Benton, “her destiny is fixed.”

Time has shown that a very undue importance was attached to the considerations which precipitated the adoption of that measure. It is now generally admitted that the apprehension of British interference in any manner which should have influenced our action on that question was entirely groundless.

The idea so much dwelt upon, of the great value of the country as a means of national defence, and of the necessity of acquiring its possession instantly, was shown at the time to be unwarranted and visionary, finding favor

with the people by its boldness and blindness, but turning out when examined by facts and figures to be only a baseless dream. Though the measure cannot be regarded as unjust toward Mexico, still we must admit that we had no immediate use for the country, and that our people permitted vague and idle apprehensions to blind them against the very serious and unhappy consequences which might reasonably have been apprehended from its annexation; that in an hour of excitement they rushed, without cause and without reflection, to the attainment of an object whose ultimate possession was certain, and which at another time might have been secured under far better auspices.

But, besides all this, the act was wrong; for no nation has the right knowingly to put its own tranquility, and the harmony of the world in jeopardy; to incur the danger of a war without a great necessity; but it is its high duty to sacrifice its own apparent interest, if necessary, to the promotion and perpetuation of peace.

CHAPTER III.

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A VIEW of some of the leading events in the intercourse between the two countries, from August, 1843, to October, 1845, showing that the design of declaring war against the United States on account of annexation, if ever seriously entertained, was at the last date entirely abandoned by Mexico. The advance to Corpus Christi.

WE have in the preceding chapters examined the measure of annexation from every point of view from which it can be considered as effecting our relations with Mexico. We have shown it to have been the primary occasion of the late unhappy war. We have pointed out the influences by which it was brought about. We have examined its abstract justice toward Mexico, and have seen that it afforded to that republic no ground of complaint. We have considered its expediency, and have found it to have been, although not unjust, yet unwise and wrong.

Though the annexation of Texas, effected at a period of much excitement, and under the influences which we have described, must be

regarded as the occasion of the war, it was not its efficient cause. The war was not its necessary consequence. We shall see as we proceed that, had the subsequent conduct of the United States been marked by conciliation and forbearance, there is every probability that all differences growing out of this measure would have been amicably settled by negotiation.

The Mexican government first takes official notice of the project for annexation in August 1843, when its minister of foreign relations, Mr. Bocanegra, writes to our minister that "the Mexican government has collected sufficient evidence from the American press that a proposition for the incorporation of the so-called republic of Texas is to be submitted to congress at its next session," and adds that his "government will consider the passage of such an act as equivalent to a declaration of war against the Mexican republic."

The next month the same functionary writes again, that "Mexico will regard the annexation of Texas as a hostile act." General Almonte, the Mexican minister, resident at Washington, announces to our secretary of state, in November following, that "Mexico must consider such



an act as a direct aggression, and is resolved to declare war as soon as it shall receive information of its adoption." Mr. Bocanegra, immediately after the treaty of annexation had been sent to the senate, issues a circular to the foreign ministers resident in Mexico, in which he styles the act "a declaration of war between the two nations." General Almonte, a few days after the resolution of congress consenting to annexation had been approved by the president, demands his passports and returns to Mexico. In the following month, April, 1845, Mexico breaks off her diplomatic relations with the United States in her own capital, declaring that the territory of Texas belonged to her by a right which she will maintain at whatever cost. In June next, president Herrera issues a proclamation, announcing that Mexico will resist by arms the proposed annexation.

This surely appears warlike enough. It would seem as if the indignation of Mexico had indeed been aroused, and that she was determined never to endure the indignity and wrongs to which she fancied herself about to be subjected. But high sounding words are very cheap in Mexico. Her actual forcible op-



position to the measure was in strange contrast with her threats. We will go back in our narrative a year before the time of President Herrera's proclamation, when the warlike farce began.

In June, 1844, Santa Anna, then president of Mexico, issues a requisition for thirty thousand men and four millions of dollars to prosecute the war against Texas. A large force is raised, and such is the despatch that before the same month is passed we find the invading army encamped at Mier, on the very border of the devoted state. General Woll, being instructed by his government to wage a war of extermination, then makes a proclamation denouncing the traitor's doom against every person found beyond the distance of one league from the Rio Grande.

Santa Anna at the same time publishes a decree, that every foreigner found on Mexican soil with arms in his hands should instantly be put to death without quarter or distinction. But no action whatever follows this exhibition of paper ferocity. Texas remains undisturbed, and the Mexican army remains at Mier.

In the winter following Herrera is chosen to

succeed Santa Anna in the presidency of Mexico. The new administration takes no hostile step. The army still remains at Mier.

In July, 1845, more than a year after the army of invasion had been raised by Santa Anna, General Taylor, under orders issued by our government at the request of the state of Texas, advances with his army to Corpus Christi, on the right bank of the Nueces.

This movement revives for a time the Mexican proclamation fever. General Arista, commanding one of the divisions of the "grand army" designed for the invasion of Texas, and General Paredes, commanding the army of reserve, issue each a furious proclamation, breathing vengeance and slaughter, and announcing the determination instantly to drive the invaders from their soil. This being over, all subsides again into perfect tranquility; the army is marched into distant parts of the republic, and its leaders turn their minds to domestic commotion. General Taylor writes thus from Corpus Christi: "No extraordinary preparations are going forward at Matamoros, the garrison does not seem to have been increased, and our consul at that place is of the opinion

that there will be no declaration of war." "The border people on both sides of the river are friendly." "There are no troops of any consequence on or near the Rio Grande." Such is the unvarying tenor of his despatches, up to the day on which he was ordered forward to that disputed river.

The propriety of the movement of our army to Corpus Christi might on some accounts be questioned. But as the matter never assumed any practical importance, as Mexico did not object to it when in October following she requested our fleet to be withdrawn from the Gulf before negotiations should be opened, as it was not alluded to as a wrongful act in the subsequent correspondence between the two governments, and was soon lost sight of behind events of greater magnitude, we shall not dwell further upon it.

## CHAPTER IV.

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THE Mission of Mr. Slidell. The refusal to receive him. Political situation of Mexico on the arrival of our Minister. Her conduct consistent. Duty of the United States. The course adopted by our government. Fall of Herrera. The refusal to send a commissioner threw upon our government the responsibility of future hostilities.

THE annexation of Texas to the United States had awakened in Mexico a strong feeling of resentment. The administration of Herrera, however, though on this account it found it necessary to continue its menaces, and keep up a show of opposition, was evidently disposed to peace.

Our executive, convinced of the amicable disposition of the Mexican government, addressed to it an inquiry in October, 1845, while General Taylor was at Corpus Christi, to ascertain whether "an envoy from the United States, entrusted with full powers to adjust all the questions in dispute between the two

governments" would be received. The Mexican minister replied, that his government was disposed to receive "*the commissioner* of the United States who might come with full powers to settle *the present dispute* in a peaceful, reasonable and honorable manner."

The promptness and cordiality of this reply evince a sincere desire for the restoration of friendship. Immediately on its receipt, Mr. Slidell was appointed by the president, envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary to reside near the government of Mexico. That government refused to receive him in this capacity, stating that they had only consented to receive a commissioner for the settlement of the present dispute, and that they could not renew diplomatic intercourse, until the difficulty on account of which it had been broken off should be first adjusted.

It has been attempted to charge Mexico with inconsistency in this matter, and with intentionally insulting the United States by violating her word. A view of the circumstances of the case will, we think, afford to every candid mind a vindication of her conduct.

The arrival of Mr. Slidell in that country

occurred at an unfortunate moment. During the few weeks that had elapsed since the promise to receive a commissioner, a sudden storm had darkened the political sky of Mexico, and the administration of Herrera was already bending before it. Its amicable views were displeasing to a majority of the people, its temporizing policy had disappointed the army. Taking advantage of the discontent of both, Paredes, having raised the cry for the recovery of Texas, was threatening its overthrow.

Under these circumstances the arrival of the American minister was a serious cause of alarm to the government. We have no reason to doubt its sincere desire to redeem its promise. Mr. Slidell himself says, that he believes the president and his cabinet to be really desirous to enter frankly upon a negotiation which would terminate all their difficulties with the United States. But the administration appeared to be conscious that his immediate reception would destroy the last hope which they entertained of withstanding the popular storm.

In this state of anxiety and alarm, the government attempted to defer his recognition



until after the meeting of the new congress on the first of January, in the hope that if they could hold over until that time, they would then be able to maintain their position. When the United States consul at Mexico announced to the government the arrival of Mr. Slidell at Vera Cruz, he was replied to that they were not prepared for his reception. When informed by the consul, on the 8th of December, of his presence in the capital, the minister of foreign relations expressed his regret that his arrival had not been delayed for a month, and in a conversation marked by great frankness and sincerity, represented the difficulties and fears of the administration, and stated that nothing positive could be done until the meeting of the new congress. This interview took place before the credentials of Mr. Slidell had been opened, and up to this time it was certainly the purpose of the government to receive him, as soon as it could be done consistently with the safety of the administration, and the success of his mission.

On the examination of these credentials, however, they were found to be the same as those which had been presented by former

ministers, having no reference to any questions in dispute, as if the friendly intercourse between the two countries had never been interrupted. The question of receiving a resident minister from the United States was immediately laid before the council of government, and in accordance with its advice, on the 21st of December, the government communicated to Mr. Slidell its refusal to receive him in that capacity; stating that they had only consented to receive a commissioner to settle the present dispute, and that to this object solely they expected the mission would have been directed. The minister of foreign relations at the same time stated that the sentiments in which a willingness to receive a commissioner were first expressed still remained unchanged, and that his government would still be happy to open negotiations for the peaceful settlement of the existing difficulty.

Here was a change of purpose instant upon the examination of the credentials of the minister. There was no hesitation, no objection on any other ground, but a determination that he could not be received, for the sole and distinct reason that he did not come in the char-

acter in which they had expected him to come, and in which alone they had promised and were willing to receive him.

The probabilities of the case afford also a strong presumption that the conduct of Mexico was entirely consistent. No one understanding the Mexican character, had he been asked at the time if that government would receive a minister from the United States, thereby abandoning openly the position which it had taken a few months before, and confessing that its complaints were groundless, and that its conduct had been ridiculous, would have hesitated to answer no. Our government itself must have been surprised at the readiness with which they imagined Mexico to have yielded her high pretensions, and to have forgotten her ancient pride. Had this been the case, there would have been in it an inconsistency indeed.

Now the language used by that government is incapable of any other fair construction than the one which it was intended to bear. The term "commissioner" is never applied to a resident minister. The answer evidently contemplated that the mission would be con-

fined to a single object; the powers of resident ministers are always general. It would seem, that without the use of a negative, language could not more distinctly express the meaning for which Mexico contended.

The parties fell into a mutual mistake. Mexico understood "all the questions in dispute" to arise from the annexation. This difficulty engrossed her whole attention, and it never occurred to her that there was any other; as indeed there was no other unadjusted question which a minister was competent to settle. She naturally supposed that it was the desire of the United States to restore friendly intercourse in the manner universal among nations. This government on the other hand seemed to imagine that Mexico only desired that the minister who might come to reside at her capital should possess full powers to settle the present dispute. The known disposition and previous conduct of Mexico certainly furnished a presumption that she would consent to no such concession. How our government could gather anything from her reply to rebut this presumption we cannot understand; we will assume, however, that it really expected the min-

ister would be received, because to suppose the contrary would be to suppose it to have acted in bad faith.

But this mutual error was soon to be explained. Mexico found that the United States had sent a minister to her capital, expecting that he would be received, and the latter discovered that Mexico had intended no such submission whatever. What was then the duty of the United States? A grave question was presented to our government; the mighty results of peace or war might hang on its decision. We think that the United States should have sent a commissioner, as Mexico desired. We rest this opinion on two grounds. It would have been a just and conciliating policy, and it would in all probability have secured a peace.

In the annexation of Texas, we had been the gainers at the expense of Mexico. However acquired, the fact was that we came to possess a vast territory which once belonged to her. Her pride was wounded, and her jealousy was aroused. Her government saw that it was useless to contend against the act, and its only object was to yield its high preten-



sions in such a manner as to preserve its self-respect, and to calm the clamor of the people.

Now under these circumstances it would surely have been wise and just in the United States to have exercised toward that republic a spirit of kindness and generosity, to have borne with her pride, and to have taken some pains to soothe her irritation and to dispel her jealousy. The existing boundary question afforded an opportunity for that conciliating course which justice required from us, and which would gratify the feelings of Mexico.

Had that been adjusted by a commissioner, had a comparatively small sum been paid to Mexico for that undetermined extent of territory which she might be supposed to surrender and had she been treated with the forbearance due from a great nation toward a feebler one on which it was encroaching, how easily might the causes of difficulty have been dissipated, and all resentments brushed away.

Our government indeed could hardly have adopted a course better calculated than the one which it did adopt, to deepen in the minds of the Mexican people its sense of injury, and its feeling of hostility. Mexico was first charged



with having violated her word, and she was next informed that the alternative was before her, immediately to abandon her position and renew her diplomatic intercourse with the United States, or to suffer the consequences. Now consenting to the demand of Mexico would have been so perfectly in accordance with the usages of nations, it was so peculiarly proper for us to adopt a conciliatory course toward her at that time, and the unhappy consequences of this haughty and imperious conduct were so apparent, that we are driven to the conclusion that a sincere desire for peace and a renewal of friendship, and an anxiety to show to Mexico that we intended her no injury, were not in the mind of our government; but that it was impelled rather by that pride of power which generally accompanies wrong, and which can tolerate nothing but submission.

In a few days after the refusal to receive our minister, the administration of Herrera, who only a year before had been elected with unequalled unanimity, yielded to the opposition which had been excited against it, and by the act of the army the supreme power passed

without bloodshed or tumult into the hands of Paredes.

In the latter part of January Mr. Slidell was directed to apply to the new government for reception. As it might have been expected, Paredes declined receiving him on the same ground on which his predecessor had based his refusal.

There can be no reasonable doubt that the administration of Herrera, and probably that of Paredes also, would have received a commissioner to settle the dispute relating to Texas. Had a commissioner been sent and received, it is probable that peace and harmony would have been established. Now we submit, that if it appears probable that the war would have been prevented by any just and proper act on the part of the United States which that government refused to perform, it must share at least the responsibility of the war, by whichever party it might actually have been commenced.

We shall not examine the question, whether the administration of Paredes, the attempt at negotiation having been thus broken off, would have proceeded to acts of hostility against the

United States on account of the annexation of Texas. This at best would be only an examination of probabilities, which could not lead to a satisfactory conclusion, nor be of any practical consequence. Our own opinion is, that it would not. We entertain but little doubt that, as the popular commotion was taken advantage of by Paredes for his own personal elevation, so he would have been glad to avoid a collision with the United States, which would endanger its security. Many hold a contrary opinion. As Mexico was allowed no opportunity to solve this doubt, the question must remain as uncertain as it is immaterial.

## CHAPTER V.

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THE advance of our Army to the Rio Grande. This movement a violation of the rights of Mexico, which had been recognized by our Government itself.

WE have now established the fact, that war was not the necessary consequence of annexation. We have seen that beyond a reasonable doubt, notwithstanding the braggadocio and haughty language of Mexico, all matters of dispute and difficulty between that country and our own might have been settled by negotiation, had the United States really desired to preserve harmony and peace.

We now pass to the consideration of an event on which, and on which alone, the responsibility of the Mexican war must forever rest. By refusing to negotiate in the manner that Mexico desired, we had estopped ourselves from ever asserting that such a negotiation would have been unsuccessful. We could not con-

tend that it was impossible for a treaty to have been made, for we had refused to treat. As against us, the presumption is warranted that peace could have been preserved by honorable negotiation. And now, by the act which we are about to examine, we in like manner deprived ourselves of any right to assert, that even after negotiations were broken off, war might have been commenced by Mexico.

On the 13th of January, 1846, General Taylor was ordered to "advance from Corpus Christi as early as the season would permit, and occupy a position on or near the Rio Grande." We shall devote a considerable space to the examination of this act of our government, because it was the most important event in the history of the war, and no one can be competent to form any opinion concerning the causes of that unhappy contest, without fully understanding it.

Burke, in his reflections on the French revolution, says: "We have consecrated the state, that no man should approach to look into its defects but with due caution; that he should approach to the faults of the state as to the wounds of a father, with pious awe and tremb-

ling solicitude." This caution we have endeavored to exercise, and such awe and solicitude we trust our patriotism inspires; but we are unable to resist the conviction that this advance was an intentional and deliberate act of war on the part of our government.

By a law passed immediately after her independence, Texas declared her western boundary to be the Rio Grande, from its mouth to its source. Mexico, on the contrary, claimed that portions of New-Mexico, Chihuahua, Coahuila and Tamaulipas, departments of her own territory, lay east of this pretended boundary, and formed no part of the state of Texas.

Our government on several occasions recognized this claim of Mexico as entitled to its respect. Our secretary of state in 1844, in stating to Mexico the policy of this country, says, that "the president desires to settle the question of boundary on the most liberal and satisfactory terms." When, nearly a year after, congress consented to the annexation, they did so on the express condition that the territory should be "subject to the adjustment by this government of all questions of boundary that may arise with other governments."



But after all this, and while the question stood in precisely the same situation, our executive assumes the claim of Mexico to be unfounded, sends its army to the utmost limit of its pretensions, where it blockades the harbor of Point Isabel, and the mouth of the Rio Grande, and plants its cannon, "within good range for demolishing" the peaceful town of Matamoros; and writes to General Taylor that the *attempt* by Mexico to cross the Rio Grande with a considerable force would be regarded as an invasion of the United States and the commencement of hostilities.

On the mere statement of these facts the United States must stand convicted of the unjust act of treating with violent disregard a claim, which they had acknowledged it their duty to respect, and which was made by a nation with whom they were at peace, and whom it was, under the circumstances, peculiarly their duty to conciliate.

## CHAPTER VI.

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THE advance to the Rio Grande an invasion of the territory of Mexico. Louisiana as ceded to us by France in 1803 extended no farther west than to the Nueces. This river the western boundary of the Spanish province of Texas prior to 1820. The same river the boundary of the Mexican State of Texas. Texas after her independence never in any legal manner enlarged her territory. The strip of country in question in the exclusive possession of Mexico in 1846. Government aware at the time the order for the advance was issued that it would be an invasion.

THE advance of our army was not only a disregard of an unadjusted claim which it was our duty to respect, it was an invasion of the territory of Mexico. The claim of Mexico to the left bank of the Rio Grande was well founded, and there existed not a shadow of title on which Texas could rest her pretension to it. It formed no part of the state of Texas, but was and always had been in the peaceable possession of Mexico, and under the jurisdiction of her laws.

It has been contended that the boundary

which separated ancient Louisiana from New-Mexico and New Spain, formed the true western limit of Texas. The latter provinces were the original possessions of Spain. Louisiana was a province of France. In 1803 France ceded the province of Louisiana to the United States. It became important afterward to settle the boundary between the territory thus ceded and the Spanish possessions. By the treaty of 1819, the Sabine river was determined to be that boundary. The United States had derived from France an undefined claim to territory west of that river, but it was surrendered to Spain as a part of the consideration for the cession of Florida.

It was now contended that by this treaty of 1819 the United States had surrendered to Spain the entire territory from the Sabine to the Rio Grande, to all which she had received an unquestionable title from France, and that Texas embraced the identical and entire country thus surrendered; and consequently that, Texas being annexed, Mexico had no shadow of reason for disputing our authority quite to the Rio Grande.

Now we could derive from France no title

to territory which France did not herself possess. Before we proceed further we will show by historical testimony that France possessed no title at any time to the region west of the Nueces.

Discovery vests in a nation the title to uninhabited territory. Title thus acquired is however imperfect, and may be lost, unless within a reasonable time it is followed by occupation, or at least by an attempt at occupation. For it would be unjust and discouraging to enterprise if a nation, having discovered a new country which through feebleness or other cause it is unable to occupy, should have a right to forbid its settlement. Accordingly if any newly discovered country remains for many years unoccupied, the title may pass from the discoverers, and vest in a nation which shall have settled the country, cultivated the soil, and opened a new home for mankind.

Louisiana itself may be cited as an illustration of this law. In 1583, Hernando de Soto, a Spanish cavalier, searching through the trackless forests of the south for golden mines and the fountain of perpetual youth, first discovered the Mississippi near the mouth of the Ar-

kansas ; and a part of his adventurous band, after his death, descended that river to the gulf, and penetrated to the waters of Mexico. In that age of romantic visions, Spanish adventurers cared not to seek the valley so full of disaster to its discoverer, nor the river beneath whose waters he found his grave ; and France, by her settlement one hundred years afterward, acquired a title to Louisiana which Spain could not successfully dispute.

By these principles let us examine the case before us. France contended that the Rio Grande formed the western boundary of her possessions, while Spain as strenuously insisted that her sovereignty extended east to the Sabine. Historical evidence seems to point out the proper boundary between the French and Spanish provinces to have been the range of mountains which forms the southern part of the great Rocky mountain chain, in which the Red, Arkansas and Colorado rivers have their rise and which forms the western wall of the Mississippi valley, together with the desert prairies east of the Nueces, and extending about two hundred miles from the termination of this range to the Gulf.



The claim of France rested chiefly on the expeditions of La Salle, the grant of Louis XIV. to Crozat, the map of De Lisle, and a few other maps and descriptions derived from these. They were all extremely indefinite, and nearly as inaccurate as were descriptions of Central Africa, before the explorations of Park, Denham, Clapperton, Caille and the Landers. Thus the map of De Lisle included in Louisiana all the country between New-York and Pennsylvania on the east, and the Rocky mountains on the west. The grant to Crozat covered this vast extent. It was about as valid, though not quite so extensive in its sweep as the bull by which Pope Alexander VI. granted to Spain all the heathen countries which she might discover west of the Azores, and to Portugal all Asia, Africa and the East Indies.

In the year 1682, La Salle descended the Mississippi from the Illinois river to its mouth. He claimed for France all the unknown region whose waters flow in that river to the ocean, and named it Louisiana after his sovereign. Three years after, at his solicitation, the French government equipped four vessels to seek the mouth of the Mississippi by sea, and he set out



upon a new expedition, to establish a great colony on the fertile shores watered by that river. Sailing, through ignorance of the coast, one hundred leagues westward of his destination, he was finally landed in the bay of Metagorda, and saw the ships sail away, leaving him with less than a hundred companions in that unknown land. The colony melted rapidly away by disease and dissension, and he himself, within a few months, leaving the arms of France in the forests of Texas, met death through private treachery in the land which he had discovered for his king. The settlement was then abandoned, and seven men who alone escaped its numerous disasters, wandered eastward to the Mississippi, and returned to Canada. "These distresses," says the Abbe Raynal, "soon made France lose sight of a region, that was then but little known."

In 1722, Bernard de la Harpe attempted to plant a French colony on nearly the same spot, which enterprize, as Bancroft informs us, "had no other result than to incense the natives against the French, and to stimulate the Spaniards to the occupation of the country by a fort."

These were the only efforts ever made by France to colonize Texas. "She was too feeble ever after," we are told, "to attempt extending her settlements west of the Sabine." The act of taking possession of the Mississippi cannot be considered as giving to France a title to territory lying beyond a chain of mountains, in which were its most distant sources.

Spain made her first settlement east of the Rio Grande in New Mexico, about the year 1594, eighty years before a French subject ever saw the Mississippi, and held it in undisputed possession until the Mexican revolution. All geographers have laid down the mountains which divide the valley of the Mississippi from that of the Rio Grande as the eastern boundary of the Spanish province of New Mexico. Above the Passo del Norte, then, discovery and unmolested occupancy had given Spain a title to the region west of these mountains, which no nation ever seriously questioned.

South of this point, the country east of the Rio Grande remained, until within a few years, almost an unbroken wilderness, where the forest dropped its fruit with its leaves to the ground, the undisturbed soil was black with

the mould of ages, and the Indian from the mountain roamed as wild as his fathers.

The Spaniards first crossed the lower Rio Grande in 1690, five years after La Salle's unhappy expedition. They discovered and took possession of the country to the Nueces, which no French adventurer is related to have seen, and into which, before the Mexican revolution, no adverse settler ever wandered. Having frustrated La Harpe's attempt in 1722, they continued, until the territory came into their undisputed possession by the treaty of 1819, the only rivals with the Indians for the sovereignty of the region quite to the Sabine. Bexar was founded by them in 1692. They formed a settlement at Nacogdoches, on the frontier of their claim, in the early part of the last century. Goliad dates its origin in 1716.

The Abbe Raynal, the highest French authority of the reign of Louis XVI., describes the country as a part of New Spain, and designates all the towns and rivers by Spanish names, except the bay of Metagorda, where La Salle landed. He says that the French formed no settlements upon the coast, west of the Mississippi.

The claim of Spain to the Sabine was then far from being groundless ; that of France to the Rio Grande was entirely without foundation. There are two reasons, however, why the mountain and desert boundary should be considered, not in opposition to the rightful claims of France, but rather to those of Spain, as the proper line of separation between their possessions. The discovery of Texas was by the French, and they made two attempts to settle the country, one the earliest on record, which Jefferson forcibly terms "the cradle of Louisiana," and which, as Bancroft declares, "made the country still more surely a part of her territory, because the colony found there its grave."

This is also the most prominent natural boundary which the country presents. Rivers in all new countries are undesirable dividing lines, as settlements are often formed by the same parties on both banks indiscriminately. Of this the Nueces and Rio Grande are themselves examples. But the mountain and the barren plain are great natural obstacles, and broad and appropriate objects of separation.

Mr. Adams, speaking not as the advocate,

but as the historian, says of the claim of France: "It was no right. It was a claim of all the territory to the Rio Grande, when in fact there never had been an adjustment of that claim with another, and much better authenticated claim of Spain." He stated that President Monroe, during whose administration the subject was most discussed, had no confidence in the claim to the Rio Grande. Mr. Benton, in his eloquent language says: "The magnificent valley of the Mississippi is ours, with all its fountains, springs and floods." And again: "The Rio del Norte is a Mexican river by position and possession." Now in view of historical testimony so unanswerable and authority so high as this, of what consequence is it, that the French officer who surrendered Louisiana to the United States in 1803, informed the agents of our government that that province extended to the Rio Grande, or that Mr. Jefferson and other eminent men at the same time declared, even in the strongest terms, their conviction that our newly acquired territory was bounded by that river? Of what consequence is it, that Mr. Clay, attacking in the house of representatives the treaty of



1819, declared the country to the Rio Grande to have been thrown away by that instrument, or that the executive who declared our title to fifty-four degrees forty minutes in Oregon to be clear and unquestionable, contended for the same extreme boundary? How can the claims put forth by Mr. Adams in his correspondence with the Spanish minister in 1819, when it was, as he declares, his duty to make the best case that he could for his own country, be opposed for a moment to his subsequent and opposite declaration which we have quoted? The claim of Texas to the left bank of that river, then, so far as it has been founded on the title of France, falls to the ground. It follows also that the president is mistaken, when, in his message of December, 1846, he says, that "the country which was ceded to Spain by the treaty of 1819, embraced all the country now claimed by the state of Texas, between the Nueces and the Rio Grande." It clearly embraced no part of this territory whatever.

We shall now proceed to show that before the Mexican revolution the Nueces was the farthest western boundary that was ever as-



signed to the Spanish province of Texas; for Spain erected the country from the Nueces to the Sabine into a province under this name in the latter part of the seventeenth century, and as it will be remembered, always maintained its exclusive possession, as well before as after the Sabine became her established boundary by the treaty of 1819.

Pinkerton wrote in 1802, and is the first English geographer of his time. His atlas marks the limits of Texas very distinctly. Its western boundary follows up the Nueces a short distance, until that river inclines to the west, and then leaving it strikes further east, crossing the San Antonio and Colorado.

Humboldt, the prince of geographers and travelers, spent several years in exploring Spanish America. He prepared in the royal school of Mines in Mexico, a map of that country, compiled from the best authorities in Europe and America, corrected from his own personal observation. In this map, published in Paris in 1808, the Nueces is described to be the western boundary of the province of Texas. Harrison, Black, Le Sage and Malte Brun, the most standard geographers since the day

of Humboldt, agree in giving the same western boundary to Texas.

Lieutenant Pike was sent out by President Jefferson in 1806-'07, to explore the head waters of the Arkansas. On his return, he was conducted by the Spanish authorities through New Mexico, Chihuahua and Texas. The map attached to his journal of his expedition is regarded as the best American authority of that day. On this map the western boundary of Texas is distinctly marked, somewhat east of the Nueces. All the maps of that period represent the intendencies of Nuevo San Tander and Coahuila extending eastward to the Nueces, and Texas embracing all the region between that river, or the desert east of it, and the Sabine.

And now, finally, the Nueces was the western boundary of the state of Texas under the Mexican constitution of 1824. Senator Niles, in his work on that country, says: "The river Nueces has heretofore been considered as the western boundary of Texas, the district between this and the Rio Grande having been included in the state of Tamaulipas, while the farce of a federal republic was played off in Mexico."

General Almonte was appointed in 1834 a commissioner of the Mexican government to settle the boundary between Texas and Coahuila, pending the application of the latter to be admitted as a separate state. In his official report he states, that the commonly received opinion that Texas extends to the Nueces was found to be an error; that the true line commenced at the mouth of the Aransas, the first stream east of the Nueces, and followed it to its source. The legislature of Coahuila and Texas, in their legislative acts, subsequently adopted the same boundary.

In the summer of 1836, President Jackson sent Henry M. Morfit to Texas to inquire into the political condition of that country, with reference to the acknowledgment of its independence, perhaps also remotely with a view to its annexation. His official letters were communicated by the president to congress. In one of these he says: "The political limits of Texas, previous to the last revolution, were the Nueces on the west," &c.

The original edition of Tanner's map of Texas, compiled by Stephen F. Austin, the first and most prominent of the settlers of that

state, gives the Nueces as its western boundary ; though in the editions issued since 1836, the colored line has been removed to the Rio Grande, the engraved line, however, remaining on the Nueces.

From the mass of evidence before us, we have presented that of the highest and most conclusive authority, to show the historical fact, which no one understanding the subject now denies, that before the revolution of 1834-'35, Texas as a Spanish province or as a Mexican state had and claimed no title to the country between the Nueces and the Rio Grande.

But it is said, this does not settle the question. The *republic* of Texas held her territory by a better title than musty maps or royal records can bestow. The country which she claims was hers by a declaration of independence, and a successful resistance against usurpation, was held by her arms, and consecrated by her blood. Let us see.

The mouth of the Nueces is distant about one hundred and forty miles in a direct line from that of the Rio Grande ; but two hundred and fifty miles up the latter river, the dis-

tance between the two is only about sixty miles. Of this country, a narrow strip bordering the Rio Grande, and another still less in width skirting the Nueces are alone habitable. Between these lies a solitary highland desert about one hundred and ten miles in width at its southern extremity, and containing salt lakes of considerable size.

At the time of the revolution of 1834-'35, a few families from Texas had settled at Corpus Christi on the right bank of the Nueces, at its mouth, and in the immediate neighborhood of that place, which territory had never before been inhabited, and this was the farthest western point which her emigrants had reached. Every battle in her struggle against Mexico was fought east of that river.

Let us inquire how Texas proceeded, after her independence, to extend her authority across this silent and uninhabited waste. In 1836 she passed an act, declaring her western boundary to be the Rio Grande from its mouth to its source. This harmless arrangement of words caused no commotion. It never occurred to the eastern half of New Mexico to send representatives to her new government, whose



laws never crossed her borders. Her twenty towns and villages east of the Rio Grande did not dream of renouncing their allegiance to Mexico. Chihuahua exhibited no sensation, that a corner at the Passo del Norte, famous for its wine, had been rudely severed from her state. The inhabitants of Coahuila and Tamaulipas still crossed the great river to cultivate their fields on its eastern bank, ignorant of any lawgiver except the government of Mexico. The Mexican collector in the latter department received his duties and his fees in undisturbed security until the very day, when burning their custom house, the authorities fled from Point Isabel at the approach of General Taylor.

Mr. Morfit, in the correspondence above alluded to, says: "The additional territory claimed by Texas since her independence, will increase her population at least fifteen thousand." The coolness with which Texas thus attempted to transfer to herself this "vast slice of the territory of Mexico," twelve hundred miles in length, and containing a population of at least fifteen thousand souls, is truly very laughable. "It was the intention of this government," writes Mr. Morfit, "to have claim-



ed along the Rio Grande to the thirtieth degree of latitude, and thence due west to the Pacific." Some inconvenience was apprehended, however, and "it was thought the territory claimed would be sufficient for a young republic." How modest was this political child, who knew no limit to her rights, except such as her own sovereign discretion should determine.

Judge Ellis, the president of the convention that formed the constitution of Texas, and a member of the congress which adopted the above mentioned boundary, said, on a subsequent occasion, that the only object of Texas in this proceeding was to secure a wide margin in her future negotiations with Mexico.

But it is idle to say that a government can by resolution acquire title to the territory of another. There are only two ways in which such title can be acquired, and these are treaty, and conquest followed by possession. Santa Anna, president of Mexico, was taken prisoner by the Texans in the battle of San Jacinto. Before his liberation he entered into a treaty with Texas, by which the territory from the Nueces to the Rio Grande was ceded to that state. Now every one knows that such a treaty was

only waste paper until it should be ratified by the proper authority. Texas admitted this fact by stipulating as the condition of his liberty, that Santa Anna should procure the ratification of the treaty by the Mexican congress. The Mexican congress however instantly repudiated the whole transaction, and this is the only treaty with Mexico of which Texas can boast. In 1839, a small marauding party of Texans crossed the Rio Grande, and signalized themselves by a masterly retreat before the pursuing Mexicans. In 1841, President Lamar sent three commissioners, with a strong civil force, to bring under Texan authority the eastern half of New Mexico. These were treated as invaders, captured to a man, and marched off to the mines. The world heard with horror of their sufferings, and of the barbarity of their captors. In 1842, General Somerville, having pursued the Mexican force as far as Saltillo, ordered a retreat. Between five and six hundred men refused to obey him, elected a new leader, and set off down the Rio Grande to Mier. They obtained possession of that place in the night, but the next day they were all captured by Ampudia, and sent as pris-

oners to the interior of Mexico, where some were immured in the dungeons of Perote, and some were driven with common felons to pave the streets of the capital. And these are the only attempts ever made by Texas to bring under her authority "the additional territory" which she had resolved into her possession.

All this country was included on paper in the western congressional district of Texas, but its representatives sat in the Mexican congress. She organized counties extending to the Rio Grande on paper, but their inhabitants who acknowledged her authority lived at Corpus Christi and in its immediate neighborhood, and beyond this point no judicial process from her courts was ever attempted to be served.

On the other hand, the inhabitants of this "additional territory claimed by Texas" were all Mexicans, and over it the Mexican authority had never been for a moment interrupted. That government had a custom house at Point Isabel at its southern extremity, and another at Taos on its northern limit. Only three days after the resolution consenting to the annexation had been adopted, congress passed a

law allowing a drawback on goods imported into this country, and carried overland *via* St. Louis to the Mexican city of Santa Fe, where the United States had then a consul recognized by the Mexican government.

Truth is always consistent, but wrong betrays itself by contradiction. A very good illustration of this principle was pointed out by a question asked in congress of one of the representatives from Texas, by what right General Kearney had established a territorial government in New Mexico within the limits of his congressional district, and how his constituents there dared to resist the authority of the United States. This was after the order had been given to that officer to march "to the conquest of New Mexico," and the president had congratulated congress upon the acquisition of that country, announcing that "the province of New Mexico, with its capital Santa Fe, has been captured without bloodshed."

An officer writing from the camp opposite Matamoros says: "Our situation here is a most extraordinary one. Right in the enemy's country, actually occupying their cotton and corn fields, the people of the soil leaving

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their homes, and we with a small handful of men marching with colors flying and drums beating under the very guns of one of their principal cities, while they with an army of twice our size at least make not the least resistance, not the first effort to drive the invaders off." Speaking of the inhabitants, the same writer says: "These people are all Spaniards, and are actuated by a feeling of universal hostility against the United States; and since our arrival nearly all of them have left this side of the river, and gone over, leaving their houses and much valuable property, notwithstanding every assurance from General Taylor that all their rights and property would be respected by our government. They quarrel among themselves, but against a foreign foe they are united." General Le Vega said to General Worth, in an interview held at Matamoros on the day of the arrival of our army opposite that place: "Our people are grieved to see the flag of the United States floating on the left bank of that river. There is the home of our people, there is our custom house, there are our towns and hamlets, and there stand the whitening harvests of our citizens,



and we regard your presence there as an act of unjustifiable invasion."

And against all this, Texas has on which to found her claim, neither a treaty, nor conquest, nor a moment's occupation of any part of the territory, nor the exercise of a single act of sovereignty over it; nothing except the resolution of her own congress, which body, had they thought it expedient, could easily have obtained the same title to the entire globe.

When in 1842, Mr. Webster, as secretary of state, in vindicating the independence of Texas, says, "no hostile foot finding rest within her territory for six or seven years," he could not have intended to include in the term "her territory," a country inhabited exclusively by Mexicans, governed by Mexican laws and on entering which, our merchants paid duties to Mexican collectors. He plainly designed by his broad and unqualified expression, to exclude this "additional territory" from consideration, or rather esteemed the claim of Texas undeserving of notice.

Mr. Benton, in a speech against the ratification of the treaty of annexation, delivered in the senate in 1844, says: "I wash my hands



of all attempts to dismember the Mexican republic by seizing her dominions in New Mexico, Chihuahua, Coahuila and Tamaulipas. The treaty, in all that relates to the boundary of the Rio Grande, is an act of unparalleled outrage on Mexico. By this declaration the thirty thousand Mexicans on the left bank of the valley of the Rio del Norte are our citizens, and standing, in the language of the president's message, "in a hostile attitude to us, and subject to be treated as invaders." Taos, the seat of the custom house, where our caravans enter their goods is ours; Santa Fe, the capital of New Mexico, is ours; Governor Armijo is our governor, and subject to be tried for treason if he does not submit to us; twenty Mexican towns and villages are ours, and their peaceful inhabitants, cultivating their fields and tending their flocks, are suddenly converted by a stroke of the president's pen into American citizens, or American rebels."

Governor Wright, of New-York, was then in the senate, and voted against the treaty. In a speech delivered the next autumn he said: "I believe that the treaty, from the boundaries that must be implied from it, embraced a coun-

try to which Texas had no claim, over which she had never acquired jurisdiction, and which she had no right to cede."

Mr. C. J. Ingersoll said in the house of representatives: "The territorial limits of Texas are marked in the configuration of this continent by an Almighty hand. The stupendous deserts between the Nueces and the Rio Grande are the natural boundary of the Anglo-Saxon and Mauritanian races. There ends the valley of the west; there Mexico begins. While peace is cherished, that boundary will be sacred. Not till the spirit of conquest rages, will the people on either side molest or mix with each other."

We have now seen that the French province of Louisiana never extended west of the Nueces; that the Spanish province of Texas lay entirely east of this boundary; that the same river was the farthest western limit of the Mexican state of Texas; that the authority of the republic of Texas never extended beyond the valley of the Nueces; and that New Mexico and the eastern bank of the lower Rio Grande had always been, and was at the advance of our army, inhabited by the Mexican

people, and under undisputed Mexican jurisdiction.

Our position is thus established, that the march of our army to that river, was an invasion of the territory of Mexico.

The same evidence also establishes another fact. The eastern half of New Mexico, and the country between the desert and the lower Rio Grande we are now able to say are not the property of the state of Texas. They were obtained by the treaty of 1848, and belong to the United States. Texas cannot carry into this territory her laws and her slavery. It is a part of the free territory of the union. Her claim is the height of insolence, and should not be allowed.

But, moreover, the order directing this advance was issued by our government with the full knowledge that its obedience would be such a hostile invasion, and an act of aggressive war against Mexico.

Possessing every means of information, we have a right to require and to presume in government full knowledge on such a subject. The plea of ignorance could be no extenuation of the wrong, though it would call forth our de-

rision. To have taken such a step ignorantly, would have been scarcely less culpable than to have taken it for the deliberate purpose of provoking war.

But it was not taken ignorantly. Apart from the conclusive presumption to that effect, we have positive evidence that government acted with full knowledge of the rights of Mexico.

Major Donelson, our charge d'affairs to Texas, informed this government officially in 1845, that Corpus Christi was the most western point occupied by that state. Our merchants paid duties to Mexico at Point Isabel. The order to General Taylor for his advance directed that the posts and citizens of Mexico east of the Rio Grande should not be molested. But besides these, there is one remarkable fact by which the whole question is put at rest. In October, 1845, only three months previous to the date of the order to General Taylor, Mr. Slidell was instructed by the executive of the United States, to offer to Mexico five millions of dollars for this identical strip of territory east of the Rio Grande.

Now, in view of these facts, the mind can

arrive at only one conclusion ; that the march of our army to the Rio Grande was a deliberate and intentional act of war against Mexico.

## CHAPTER VII.

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THE Invasion of Mexico the sole cause of the War. Tone of the Mexican Minister. Proclamation of Mejia. Progress of General Taylor. Order of Paredes. His Proclamation. Letter of Ampudia. Arista gives notice that he shall prosecute hostilities.

WE have now advanced far enough in our investigation to see clearly that the march to the Rio Grande was an act in direct violation of the rights of Mexico; that it was not only a violent disregard of her claims which we had recognized as entitled to our respect, but was an invasion of her territory, and that too committed with the full knowledge of its hostile character.

We shall in the present chapter show that this invasion was the sole cause of the hostilities in which we became engaged. We shall then have established the truth of our position that on this act of our government, and on this alone, the responsibility of the war must forever rest.



In pursuance of his orders, General Taylor broke up his camp on the eleventh of March, 1846, and commenced his advance. Paredes had then been nearly two months and a half in power, and had as yet evinced no hostile disposition. On the 12th of March, the day after our army began its movement, the Mexican minister writes to Mr. Slidell that "the position of Mexico is one of defence." In this communication her determination is distinctly set forth to refrain from the commencement of hostilities, and to hold herself open for what she conceived to be honorable negotiation.

On the same day General Mejia, who commanded the forces of the department of Tamaulipas, made a proclamation, declaring that the limits of Texas were certain and recognized, and had never extended beyond the Nueces, and that the American army was then advancing to take possession of a large part of Tamaulipas. On the 19th, approaching the river San Colorado, the boundary of the settled portion of that department, General Taylor was met by a party of rancheros, who informed him that they were instructed to oppose his passage, and that if he crossed that river, the

act would be considered a declaration of war. This was the first evidence of hostility that he had met with.

Before his column reached Point Isabel, he was met by a civil deputation from Matamoros, which delivered to him a formal protest from the prefect of the northern district of Tamaulipas against his occupation of the country. The Mexican authorities setting fire to their public buildings, fled from Point Isabel at his approach, while our fleet blockaded its harbor, and the 28th of March saw our army arrived at the Rio Grande. On a bluff which rises from the river opposite Matamoros, and commanding that town, General Taylor pitched his fortified camp, which afterwards, in memory of its brave defender, received the name of Fort Brown.

In the conference between Generals Worth and Le Vega, above alluded to, the latter stated that Mexico had not declared war against the United States, and that the two countries were still at peace; but added, that the march of the American troops through a large part of the Mexican territory was an act of war. On the 4th of April, President Paredes issued an order

to the Mexican commander at Matamoros, to attack our army "by every means that war permits." It has been said that this order was issued before the news of the advance of our forces had reached the city of Mexico, and in accordance with a predetermination of Paredes to wage war for the recovery of Texas.

Let us look at the facts. Nineteen days had elapsed since, on the 15th of March, scouting parties had been seen by General Taylor, sent out evidently, as he says, for the purpose of ascertaining his movements. The distance from Matamoros to Mexico is but a trifle over five hundred miles. The news of an invasion would probably travel not less than thirty miles in a day, at which speed the distance could be accomplished in nineteen days and less. Undoubtedly it flew a hundred miles a day at least. Paredes must then on the 4th have been informed of the advance of General Taylor.

On the 23d of the same month, Paredes made a proclamation to the people of Mexico, which, taken in connection with the attendant circumstances, must be considered as showing conclusively the motives which led to the order of the 4th, the only one which had been is-

sued by him. In this proclamation he says: "I solemnly announce, that I do not declare war against the United States of America, because that power pertains to the august congress of the nation. But the defence of the Mexican territory, which the United States troops *have invaded*, is an urgent necessity, and my responsibility would be immense before the country, did I not give command to repel these forces, which act like enemies. I have so commanded."

On the 6th of April, General Taylor wrote to the adjutant general as follows: "On our side a battery for four eighteen pounders will be completed, and the guns placed in battery to-day. These guns bear directly upon the public square of Matamoras, and are within good range for demolishing the town." On the 13th, Ampudia, the general commanding at Matamoras wrote to General Taylor, ordering him to break up his camp, and retire beyond the Nueces, to leave the soil of the department of Tamaulipas "while our governments are negotiating the pending question in relation to Texas," and declaring that his remaining on the soil of Mexico must be consid-

ered an act of aggressive war. To this he adds: "If you insist in remaining within the territory of Mexico, it will clearly result that arms, and arms alone, must decide the question." On the receipt of this communication, General Taylor issued orders to our naval commander at Brazos Santiago, to blockade the mouth of the Rio Grande, for the purpose of cutting off the supplies and trade of Matamoras.

And not until eighteen days after this new outrage, on the 24th of April, General Arista, who had taken command of the Mexican army, gives notice to our commander that he considered hostilities commenced and should prosecute them.

We have thus seen our army ordered to advance one hundred and forty miles beyond the spot which government was officially informed to be the most western point occupied by Texas, to cross that silent solitude of sand, the boundary of the Mississippi valley, and of the Anglo-Saxon race, and to enter a territory inhabited by citizens of Mexico and governed by her laws. We have seen the army take forcible possession of that country, against the pro-



tests of its authorities and its citizens. We have seen the inhabitants flying before our forces, two harbors blockaded by our vessels, and one of the principal towns of northern Mexico invested by our batteries.

On the other hand, there is not a single fact which tends to warrant any other supposition, than that the advance of our army to the Rio Grande, and its continuance on the soil of Mexico, was the sole cause, as it was certainly a sufficient cause of the hostilities which it begun. Then on that movement must rest its entire responsibility.



## CHAPTER VIII.

THE Object of this movement of our Army. The reason given by the Executive not the real motive, as proved by the circumstances of the case, and by the dispatches to Mr. Slidell. The provocations urged by our government considered. The war designed to be brought about in such a manner as to throw on Mexico the odium of its commencement.

It is natural to seek the reason for a measure exhibiting in the executive of the United States such an unconstitutional assumption of power, such a disregard of the acknowledged rights of Mexico, such a violation of the laws of natural justice, and from which such momentous consequences have flowed.

The reason given by the president in his message of May 6th, 1846, for this movement, is, that "it became of urgent necessity to defend that portion of our country;"—meaning, we suppose, the state of Texas.

Now we will state a train of circumstances

which give us the right to suppose, nay, which leave us no room to doubt, that protection to our citizens was not its object, but that its expected and intended result was war with Mexico.

The last settlement which it became of such "urgent necessity to defend" was left by the army one hundred and forty miles in their rear. We have seen that government knew that this movement would be a violent disregard of the claims of Mexico, which itself had declared entitled to its respect, and moreover that it would be an invasion of the territory of Mexico, and a violation of the homes of its citizens. Now it is very difficult to understand why, if an invasion from Mexico was apprehended, a position for our army and all its stores, one hundred and forty miles from the people and territory which it was to defend, and which could be attacked from so many different directions, was so much more advantageous than any other, that this great outrage must be committed and war thus rushed upon to attain it.

It is plain that the reason given by the executive for this act, even if true, would not only have been insufficient as a justification, but

entirely inadequate as a motive for its conduct; what shall we say then when we find no such reason ever in fact to have existed?

Now government was at that time officially informed by General Taylor, that there were but few Mexican troops on or near the Rio Grande, that the inhabitants were friendly, that appearances indicated a continued quietness, and that there was no reason to apprehend an invasion by Mexico. It was yet in ignorance of the accession of Paredes at the time that the order to advance was transmitted.

Is it possible to conceive what "urgent necessity" the peaceful circumstances of the times created, which rendered it imperative that our national obligations should be so disregarded, this country invaded, and the horrors of war endangered and provoked?

No, it is not possible that government could have been influenced to this course by any such considerations.

But the circumstances attending this movement not only show that the defence of Texas could not have been its object, they also tell us what its object was.

On the 20th of January, a week after the

order for his advance had been issued to General Taylor, the secretary of state writes to Mr. Slidell : " Should the Mexican government, by finally refusing to receive you, consummate the act of folly and bad faith of which they have afforded indications, nothing will remain for this government but to take the redress of the wrongs of our citizens into our own hands." "The government, in anticipation of the final refusal of Mexico to receive you, have ordered the army to advance, and take a position on the left bank of the Rio Grande, and have ordered the fleet into the gulf." Here we have the true reason of this movement unequivocally set forth. Congress and the people were attempted to be imposed upon with the falsehood, that its object was to defend our citizens from attack, and our country from invasion ; but Mr. Slidell was informed, that it was done in anticipation of a refusal to receive him. And what was the army sent there to do if he should be refused ? The next sentence explains this also. "The president will then be enabled to act with vigor and promptitude, the moment that congress shall give him authority." Then according to the express avowal of the govern-

ment, the army was sent across that great natural boundary, and to the bank of "that grand and solitary river," to *act*.

A week later the secretary writes again: "should that government refuse to receive you, the cup of forbearance will then have been exhausted. Nothing will then remain but a resort to arms."

Mr. Slidell writes from Mexico: "The most extravagant pretensions will be made and insisted on, until the Mexican people shall be convinced by hostile demonstrations, that our difficulties must be settled promptly, either by negotiation, or by the sword." This letter was received in Washington on the 12th of January, and the next day the order was issued for the advance of our army.

The army now being prepared "to act," Mr. Slidell applies to the government of Paredes for reception; and assuming a tone of offended dignity, he thus announces the ultimatum of his government. "The present state of *quasi* hostility, is incompatible with the dignity and interests of the United States, and it is now for Mexico to decide whether it shall

give place to negotiation, or to an open rupture."

Receive the minister which the United States chooses to send, abandon your position and pretensions, acknowledge that all your acts for a year towards her have been groundless and absurd; do this instantly, not a word of explanation, or feel the power of her arms. Such is the character and tone of this strange diplomacy.

Then the reason given by the executive for this movement was not the motive which led to it, but, made with a full knowledge of all the circumstances which we have described, the deliberate purpose which prompted the act was war with Mexico in the event of Mr. Slidell's rejection. We feel a degree of shame in thus convicting the executive out of its own mouth of such a piece of duplicity, of telling in a solemn message such an untruth to the American people and to the world.

It becomes a matter of serious inquiry, what were the provocations, which had thus worn out the patience of our government, and exhausted its "cup of forbearance." As but



two causes of complaint have ever been urged against Mexico, we must presume these to have been all that existed.

The first was, that at the annexation of Texas she ceased to pay the instalments of the debt to our citizens, which had been adjudged against her. The other injury, which was so grievous that it left no alternative "but a resort to arms," was the refusal to receive a resident minister until the difficulty growing out of the annexation had been adjusted; "when" said Mexico, "diplomatic intercourse will follow of course."

We have a right to presume that these were not sufficient grounds of war, because our government always denied the fact that it made war on their account. It exerted all its ingenuity to throw upon Mexico the odium of its commencement.

And here again we see the inconsistency of wrong. The executive in its message of December, 1845, and still more fully in that of the following year, recounts the injuries which our citizens had received from Mexico through a long series of years, and which still remained unredressed. Now the only tendency of this

recital would be to justify our government in commencing a war. If the argument is not valid for this, it cannot be for any purpose. But we are immediately told that Mexico began the war, that we made every effort to avoid it, and that it was forced upon us by her invasion. Through many pages government is laboring to justify an act, which it is all the while insisting that it did not commit. These two strings were badly out of tune, and the performance on them together produced a horrible discord.

We shall not consume the time of our reader in proving that it was a crime for a great nation to make war upon a weak and distracted state upon such pretexts as these. The payment of her debt by Mexico had been suspended for about two years. The claims of our citizens on France for her spoliations remained neglected by that government for twenty years, and were at last amicably settled.

We have seen that in accordance with national usage, and with the far higher obligations of justice and magnanimity, the United States, instead of visiting Mexico with their vengeance, on account of her refusal to receive

their minister, should have yielded to her just and proper demand.

A quarrelsome people seeking a cause for hostility, a tyrant wanting an excuse for blood, an ambitious and selfish government envying its neighbor her possessions, and watching an opportunity to despoil her of them, might take up with such imagined provocation. But that a christian government, a friend of peace, a free enlightened people, should go to war on such pretexts as these, should use such language as we have read, and adopt such measures as we have witnessed, is as incomprehensible as it is disgraceful.

But war with Mexico was not the only object of the movement to the Rio Grande. It was indeed its great ultimate end, but there was an incidental object which it was designed to effect, with the meanness of which the act of commencing war upon frivolous pretexts can aspire to no rivalry.

We shall show, that the object of the advance to that river was not only to involve this country in a war with Mexico, but was part of a deliberate contrivance to bring the

war about in such a manner as to throw on Mexico the odium of its commencement.

The facts of the case present a strange enigma. This hostile act was committed with an eagerness which led to an unconstitutional assumption of power by the executive. That it was aware of the unconstitutionality of this order, is evident from the fact which we have already seen, that to conceal its character a deliberate falsehood was told to congress and the people.

The secretary of state informed Mr. Slidell, as we have seen, that, having ordered the army to the Rio Grande, the president would be enabled to act with vigor and promptitude the moment that congress should give him authority. The army encamps on the bank of the Rio Grande. The minister is rejected. Congress remains in session ready to receive any communication from the executive. But that officer never asks for authority. Nearly two months elapse, but the executive, who was to act with such vigor and promptitude, remains entirely inactive. The army meanwhile has sat quietly down on acknowledged Mexican soil, blocka-

ding her harbors, and threatening one of her cities, but instructed not to molest her posts and citizens, not to strike the first blow.

Why was this strange silence? There can be only one explanation. The purpose of the executive was accomplished when the army took up its position on the Rio Grande. It was not sent there to act, but to provoke a blow. The case admits of no other supposition. The presence of the army accomplished no other object. Time has failed to disclose to us any other object for which it could have been sent there and maintained there, in the manner that it was.

The most favorable interpretation that can be put on Mr. Buchanan's dispatches to Mr. Slidell is, that the army was sent to the Rio Grande for the purpose of intimidation. This object failed. Mr. Slidell was rejected. Government knew it. He was ordered home, but the army was not moved. Of course the government who kept it there had something for it to do. It could no longer serve to intimidate, it could only irritate and provoke. The executive must have known that hostilities would be the inevitable consequence of its



presence. Then to incite Mexico to war must have been the design of the movement.

If the antecedent circumstances of the case admit of no other conclusion than this, those which follow establish its truth beyond a question.

During this "masterly inactivity" the plot was ripening. The carefully laid train was burning up to the mine. Mexico, having received injuries which would arouse the spirit of a slave, having seen hostilities committed against her on account of the "urgent necessity to defend that portion of our country," which no nation on earth would have endured, finally declares her determination to prosecute the hostilities which the United States had commenced, and sends her army across the Rio Grande to attack the invaders.

On the receipt of this intelligence, the executive sends a war message to congress. "Mexico," it declares, "has passed the boundary of the United States, has invaded our territory, and shed American blood on American soil;" and it calls upon the nation to punish this outrage, and to prosecute to "an honorable peace" the war thus "forced upon us."



For the moment we will pass over the right of Mexico, and only consider the territory to have been in dispute. While territory remains in this situation, and before the claims of the parties have been adjusted, the right of one claimant is always presumed to be equally good with that of the other. In the first encounter between detachments of the two armies, the attack was made by the Americans. The American blood shed, in the language of the executive, on our own soil, and about which so much patriotic indignation was wasted, turned out to have been shed by a Mexican company in repelling a charge of American cavalry, in self-defence, against a wanton attack made upon it by the direction of the executive of the United States, and under an order from the commander-in-chief to capture and "destroy" it.

Now if the invasion of that territory and the shedding the blood of Americans there by Mexico were a sufficient cause of war for us, its prior invasion, the first attack and the shedding the blood of Mexicans there by us were at least an equal cause of war for her.

But moreover, its own acts show that the ex-

ecutive, when it made that declaration to the world, knew it to be totally and unqualifiedly untrue. We know that this is strong language; but when the occupation of territory by Mexico, which government knew to be her own, and for which it had just offered her five millions of dollars, is pronounced to be a sufficient cause of war against her, how can the inconsistency be reconciled? The one must have been squandering, or the other must be false.

There appears also in the executive a desire to kindle in the minds of our people a spirit of war against Mexico. Having, in pursuit of its remorseless purpose brought the two countries into collision, its next object was to enlist the enthusiasm of the people in the war which it purposed to wage. "Texas organized counties extending to the Rio Grande, their inhabitants are represented in your congress," proclaims the government which had just been officially informed that Corpus Christi was the most western point occupied by that state. "After the battle of San Jacinto, Mexico never crossed the Rio Grande," proclaims the same authority, whose merchants paid duties to Mex-

ico at Point Isabel, and which had ordered General Taylor to respect her posts and citizens east of that river. "Louisiana extended to the Rio Grande. That was the boundary of our original possessions. Jefferson, Madison, Monroe, Pinkney, Adams, Benton and Clay, have all declared it," announces the executive, laboring by the introduction of a blind and antiquated claim to excite the national pride and to complete the confusion in which it had involved the transaction. "Patriots of America, avenge the blood of your fellow-citizens shed on you own soil!" echo throughout the land the organs of that government which had just offered to Mexico five millions of dollars for the country. The excitable nation swallows this series of falsehoods, and rushes with a blind enthusiasm into the contest. Thus the object of government was attained, we were involved in war with Mexico, and our citizens believed the scandalous deception that she was the aggressor, and we the wronged and insulted nation, compelled to fight, but ready to sacrifice all but our honor for the sake of peace.

## CHAPTER IX.

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THE Declaration of War. The duty of Congress. The consequences which would have followed the performance of that duty.

IN his message of the 11th of May, the president declared that war existed, and notwithstanding all our efforts to avoid it, existed by the act of Mexico herself; and recommended the most prompt and energetic measures to bring the war to a speedy and successful termination.

An act providing for the prosecution of "the existing war," and authorizing the president to employ the entire military force of the country, and to accept the services of fifty thousand volunteers for its prosecution, was passed by congress on the 13th, the preamble of which declared, that "by the act of the republic of Mexico, a state of war exists between that government and the United States."

Let us suppose a great and christian government, a friend of peace, to have become so little the slave of pride, that it is willing to acknowledge that it has done wrong. Let us suppose, that this government claims the title to territory which has been for a long time in the possession of another power, that it has recognized the claims of this power, and has provided that the dispute should be settled by negotiation. Let us further suppose, that while the question remains yet unsettled, the executive of this government should send an army to take possession of the entire territory in dispute; that this army after being encamped for a month on its farthest boundary where it had committed undisguised acts of hostility, having received protests from the inhabitants and authorities against its advance, and orders from the government to retire, is at last attacked, and after some bloodshed becomes placed in a perilous situation, and the executive should communicate these facts to the legislature. What course of conduct might we expect that body to adopt? Would it declare that war existed by the act of its adversary, and place means in the hands of the executive to prose-

cute the contest with energy? We will assume that it would not make this declaration, unless it had become satisfied that it was true; nor take this irretrievable step, unless it was convinced that its cause was just. Its members would first inquire, what is the cause of these hostilities. They would not look far off, and perplex themselves with speculations as to what might have been their remote occasion; but would be satisfied with the obvious and necessary cause which had been communicated to them. They would then ask, was this act of our executive justifiable. And to answer this, they would only need to learn that the claim of their adversary still remained unadjusted, and that their army found the country as it had ever been, inhabited by people of that nation alone, and governed by its laws. They would inquire what cause existed to warrant such an aggression. And when they were told that the only provocation which had "exhausted the cup of forbearance" had been a neglect for two years to pay her debt by their adversary, and a refusal to receive their minister, they would not hesitate to say we have done wrong. We have provoked and



began a war without a cause. We cannot condemn in our adversaries that patriotism, for the want of which we would execrate our own countrymen. We cannot prosecute this war with justice. It is opposed to every principle of humanity and every precept of religion. "Deity has not a single attribute that would side with us in such a contest."

Their only inquiry would be how to prevent the shedding another drop of blood. They would order the invading army to return immediately within their own undisputed territory. They would select the greatest and wisest of their number, and send them without delay to arrest hostilities and negotiate a peace.

Surely the ingenuous mind can require no argument to prove the abstract justice of such a course, and the wrong which would mark any other conduct. We envy not the moral sense of that man, whose mind does not rush instinctively to the conclusion, that there could be no other course consistent with christianity and justice.

Such, as we have shown, was the case of the United States and Mexico, as viewed most fa-

vorably for the former. This high duty devolved upon congress. There existed no circumstances which could alter or modify it. This duty they did not perform. Only fourteen in the house of representatives and four in the senate refused to vote for a declaration, which, being false, no one of them could have known to be true, and for an act whose consequences they could not foresee, founded on the assumed truth of that declaration. We say founded on its assumed truth, for we would fain vindicate the common sense of congress, though at the expense of its principles, from the imputation of authorizing these vast preparations which three months could not see completed, and placing at the disposal of the executive this great force, which could scarcely within the same time be brought into the field, merely to rescue General Taylor from a perilous position where he must be conquered or from which he must be rescued almost before the vote of congress could be taken. Reflection and wisdom seem to have fled frightened at the echo from the battle field.

We have supposed that the action of congress on this subject should have been regula-

ted, not by its probable consequences, but solely by a sense of duty. It may be well, however, to glance at the more obvious results which would have followed such an exhibition of justice.

There cannot, we think, be a reasonable doubt that such a course would have effected an immediate suspension of hostilities, and a speedy peace. Mexico surely did not desire war, and the earnest and generous manner in which these objects would have been sought would have ensured their attainment. In this peace the *uti possidetis* would probably have formed the basis for the establishment of the boundary; securing to the United States every foot of territory which they became entitled to by the annexation of Texas. The claims of our citizens upon Mexico would have been adjusted, and the most liberal commercial relations would probably have been established between the two countries.

Just, magnanimous and generous conduct is never lost even upon a savage. The human mind never becomes so brutalized that it cannot in some degree be softened and prompted

to rivalry by its exhibition. Its tendency in this case must have been to dissipate the national prejudices of Mexico, to liberalize her views and policy, and to establish a lasting friendship toward us. There would have been a nobleness in the deed which would have ensured for us a higher respect among foreign nations than a thousand victories. There is something in the heart of man which leads him, oftentimes unconsciously, to imitate the conduct and the disposition which he admires in others. Who can estimate the silent influence of that nation which would not do wrong?

But more valuable than all its other consequences, would have been the effect of the act upon our national character. Presenting before the people an example which would have tended to check their strange eagerness for war and reckless desire for the acquisition of territory, it would have exalted and refined their sense of national justice, and would have given birth to a better love for their country, a purer pride in her glory won by such acts as these, and a higher respect for her laws.

We have finished our examination of the

causes which led to the Mexican war, and the means which should have been adopted by our government to avoid it.

We have seen, that its occasion was the annexation of Texas to the United States, a measure which, though not inconsistent with justice to Mexico, must be acknowledged to have been uncalled for, and in view of its probable consequences, to have been unwise and wrong. We have seen, that the war might have been prevented by sending a commissioner to Mexico; for its refusal to do which, the United States can offer no excuse. We have seen, that the advance of our army to the Rio Grande was a deliberate invasion of the known territory of Mexico, and was the sole cause of the war. We have seen, that this invasion was not for the defence of our territory, but was the result of a determination to wage war against Mexico in the event of the rejection of our minister. We have seen this determination studiously concealed, and means adopted to goad Mexico to hostilities; and when these had proved successful, we have seen our country incited to the contest by the falsehood that her army had invaded our soil. And we have seen moreover,

that congress might probably have stayed the war even after its commencement. Then on us must rest the whole responsibility of this unprovoked and wanton aggression, as clearly without justification as it is without remedy.

This is a hard judgment, but we solemnly believe that it is the voice of truth, and that when the prejudices and passions of the present hour shall have cleared away, when the causes of this war shall have become more universally known, and history shall have sifted the truth from error, posterity will record the same decision—that the misconduct of our rulers involved this country in a crime for which no extenuation can be pleaded, and brought upon us a calamity whose extent we can but imperfectly realize.



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CHAPTER X.

THE Objects of the War. Conquest. Its Progress. The Treaty of peace.

WE come now to inquire into the objects of this war, in which examination we shall give a general view of its progress and events.

The president, in his message of December, 1846, says: "The war has not been waged with a view to conquest, but having been begun by Mexico, it has been carried into the enemy's country with a view to obtain an honorable peace, and thereby secure an ample indemnity for the expenses of the war, as well as to our much injured citizens, who hold large demands against Mexico."

The meaning of this enigmatical expression, "an honorable peace," something which was to possess such a great value in ready money, we shall discover presently.

Now we have seen that the war was not commenced by Mexico, but by our government. How an honorable peace could follow such a war, causeless and disgraceful to a christian people, it is beyond our power to comprehend. The wrong which marked its inception must attend every step of its progress. The obligation to arrest it which existed at its commencement, must be renewed every moment of its continuance. Its victories must be murder, its acquisitions must be robbery.

We have seen a determined purpose in the executive to effect a war, a purpose for the attainment of which truth and the constitution were alike disregarded.

And for this purpose the messages of the executive furnish us with no motive. One thing however is plain. The neglect of Mexico to pay her debt to our citizens and her refusal to receive our minister were not its causes. Had they been, had the declarations of the executive to Mr. Slidell been sincere, had it believed its own story, that the rights and honor of the country had been invaded, and that indeed nothing remained "but a resort to arms," it was clearly its duty to lay the matter before con-

gress, which was then in session, and which could alone adopt the necessary measures. It would undoubtedly have done so. Deceit and unconstitutional means would not then have been resorted to. Besides, government stoutly denied that it made war at all, thereby showing its own consciousness that the reasons which it had before declared to have exhausted its cup of forbearance, were not only ridiculous as a justification, but useless as excuses for commencing the war. No, these could not have been the reasons which led to it.

Then what were they? What was the purpose for which this cunningly contrived plot was laid to involve the country in a war without the sanction of congress, and falsehoods were employed to incite the people to its prosecution?

Mr. Calhoun, so late as January, 1847, declared in the senate, that up to that hour the causes of the war were left to conjecture. All was then involved in mystery. Since the words of Mr. Calhoun were uttered, day has dawned upon this darkness, and the mystery is revealed. The reasons given to Mr. Slidell are now shown to have been as false as was the

cry of defence by which the nation was aroused. That amiable sympathy for "our much injured citizens" was all an imposition. The pretended necessity to take the redress of their wrongs into our own hands, was only a cloak to a darker purpose.

The enigma is solved, and as at the touch of the enchanter's wand, all the contradictions which we have exposed stand in perfect harmony. They crystalize in wondrous order around one all-pervading purpose.

Conquest was the animating idea of all this scheme. The acquisition of the territory of another nation was the sole purpose for which this war was devised and carried on. All the pretended sympathy was for this. This it was which so mysteriously exhausted the cup of forbearance. The country of Mexico was invaded for this and this alone.

This fact we shall proceed to establish by proof, convincing even to scepticism itself.

When we know that a person desires the possession of any particular object, and all his actions for a long time after are precisely adapted to its attainment, and finally he does obtain and possess it, and expresses his gratifica-

tion at the acquisition which he has made, we have a right to suppose that its attainment was his constant purpose during all that time, and that the adaptation of his acts to that attainment was but the carrying out of his original design.

In November, 1845, the president instructed Mr. Slidell to negotiate with Mexico for the purchase of the country down to the Rio Grande, New-Mexico, and the two Californias. He was authorized to pay not more than five millions of dollars for the first, ten millions for the first and second, and twenty-five millions for the whole, and was instructed to procure them as much cheaper as possible. He was directed and encouraged by great personal prospects to use his utmost exertions to purchase the territory.

We shall divide the war with Mexico into two acts. In the first we shall see the possession of this identical country secured, and our authority established over it; and in the second we shall witness the process by which the title to it was extorted.

The Mexican army on the Rio Grande having been defeated in two desperate and une-

qual contests, General Taylor moved with his column, now increased to about six thousand men, upon Monterey. He arrived before that city on the 19th of September, and after a terrible assault, continued through two days, and against almost insurmountable obstacles both of nature and art, made himself master of that stronghold. A division of nearly three thousand men under General Wool, left San Antonio de Bexar about the last of September for the conquest of Coahuila and Chihuahua. They entered Monclova on the 31st of October without bloodshed. General Taylor's advanced position was found to command the department of Chihuahua, and it was deemed advisable to concentrate the different columns. General Wool's command was therefore diverted from its original destination, and moving southward, established a communication with General Taylor at Parras, the latter at the same time occupying Saltillo with a part of his forces.

General Kearney having been ordered to march to the conquest of New Mexico and California, left Fort Leavenworth on the 30th of June, on that distant expedition. He reached



Santa Fe on the 18th of August, after a march of nearly nine hundred miles, and took possession of the country in the name of the United States, almost without a show of resistance. With about three hundred dragoons he then commenced his long march to the settled districts of California. Before leaving the valley of the Rio Grande, however, he was met by an express from Colonel Fremont of such a nature that he determined to send back a part of his force, and selecting only one hundred men to accompany him, continued on his route. On his arrival he found all that vast country in the quiet possession of the Americans, its conquest having been already completed by Commodore Stockton and Colonel Fremont.

A company of regular artillery was sent by sea in August to Monterey upon the Pacific, and these were followed in the next month by a regiment of volunteers "persons of various pursuits," raised in New-York city and its neighborhood, for the express purpose of settling in California after they should have completed its conquest. These never returned. This plan of colonizing with soldiers the territory to be acquired by conquest was conceived

by government among the earliest plans of the war, and was communicated to the commander of the expedition within two months after the first blow had been struck on the Rio Grande. About nineteen-twentieths of these conquests were unoccupied land. The instructions given to the commanding officers were that the country was "not to be surrendered in any event, or under any contingency." Commodore Sloat, who at that time commanded our squadron in the Pacific, says in his general order of July 7th, 1846: "It is not only our duty to take California, but to preserve it afterwards as a part of the United States at all hazards." The secretary of war, in his instructions to General Kearney, says: "It is known that a large body of Mormon emigrants are *en route* for California, for the purpose of settling in that country. You are desired to use all proper means to have a good understanding with them, to the end that the United States may have their co-operation in taking possession of and holding that country." In August, the officer in command of our naval force in the Pacific, is ordered "to take, if not already done, immediate possession of Upper Califor-

nia, so that if the treaty of peace should be made on the basis of the *uti possidetis*, it may leave California to the United States." The same month, Commodore Stockton made a proclamation to the people scattered over that great region, that "the territory of California now belongs to the United States." A few days after, he writes to the government: "This rich and beautiful country belongs to the United States, and is forever free from Mexican dominion." In these provinces the conquerors proceeded to establish civil governments, and the inhabitants were required to take the oath of allegiance to the United States. In his message of December, 1846, the president says: "It may be proper to provide for the security of these important conquests, by making an adequate appropriation for the purpose of erecting fortifications, and for the maintenance of our possession and authority over them;" and in the same paper he felicitates the American people on "the vast extension of our territorial limits."

It is certain that the attention and exertions of our government were thus far exclusively directed to the conquest and permanent possession

of Upper California and New Mexico, and to the military occupation of Tamaulipas, New Leon, Coahuila and Chihuahua, to be held, as was afterwards avowed, as a means of compelling the surrender of the former.

We shall now examine the second act of the war, or the summary way of compelling a cession of these territories.

In July, soon after the opening of the war, an offer of negotiation was made by the president. As this was not accepted, we do not know what its basis would have been. In January following, the offer was renewed and accepted by Mexico, on the condition that our forces should first evacuate her territory. This condition was pronounced wholly inadmissible, and that attempt also failed. That the acquisition of this identical territory was the sole object of the war at that time is shown by the following circumstance. In January, 1847, a bill was introduced into congress, and which was finally passed on the last day of the session, appropriating three millions of dollars, for the purpose of enabling the president to conclude a treaty of peace with Mexico. The senator introducing the bill says: "The president has

reason to believe, that upon a certain advance being made to Mexico to enable her to pay her expenses, she will be willing to cede to us New Mexico and California."

In the meantime General Taylor, with his small, heroic band of about forty-five hundred men, had hurled back in confusion from the hill of Buena Vista the vast army of upwards of twenty thousand, that with Santa Anna at its head advanced like the billows of the sea to overwhelm him; and Vera Cruz, with the renowned castle of San Juan d'Ulloa, had fallen before the science and bravery which had been combined against them. The president, manifesting a desire and making exertions for the termination of the war, which, had the invasion admitted of any excuse, and had the terms of peace been better than an outrage, would have been truly laudable, appointed Mr. Trist, in April following, a commissioner to proceed to the head-quarters of the army, with full powers to negotiate a treaty of peace, whenever the Mexican government should desire to do so. He did not reach the army until after the national bridge had been triumphantly passed, and the brilliant victory of Cerro Gor-



do had crowned our arms. The dispatches which he bore, were not communicated to the Mexican government until in June, when our army had reached the populous and wealthy city of Puebla.

General Scott, having been reinforced by about five thousand men, left his quarters in that city early in August, and moved toward the capital. On the 19th and 20th of that month he encountered the hosts of the enemy at Contreras and Churubusco, the first nine miles and the second four miles distant from the city of Mexico, achieving two decisive but costly victories. On the 24th, an armistice was concluded between the two armies, to allow opportunity for negotiation between Mr. Trist and the Mexican commissioners. The former had brought the plan of a treaty with him from Washington. And what was this plan? It asked for no indemnity for the expenses of the war, for no satisfaction for the claims of our citizens, for no atonement for the indignities of which our government had complained; but it asked Mexico to make out to the United States a bill of sale of the territory to the Rio Grande, New Mexico and



the two Californias, together with the right of way across the isthmus of Tehuantepec, for which the United States were to pay ——— dollars, the blank being left unfilled. The Mexican commissioners reply to this proposal, that Mexico having consented to surrender Texas to the Rio Grande to the United States for a proper consideration, the cause of the war has disappeared, and the war itself ought to cease. In respect to the other territories, "it is contrary to every idea of justice," say they, "to make war upon a people, because it refuses to sell territory which its neighbor wishes to buy." "Mexico cannot sell her people against their will, and she declines the proposition." But acceptance of the proposition, or war was the only alternative. On the 6th of September, the armistice was broken off, and the war was renewed, to compel Mexico to part with about one-third of her territory. This was followed on the 8th, by the battle of El Molino del Rey won by General Worth, with only about three thousand men. On the 13th, after a cannonade and bombardment from the early morning of the day before, the citadel of Chapultepec, the last and most impregna-

ble defence beyond the walls of Mexico, was carried by an assault, perhaps the most exciting and terrible in the history of America. Driven by the resistless onset from every lower position, and finally from the stronghold itself, the Mexican forces retreated along the great Belen and San Cosme causways in confusion to the city. Our army followed in eager pursuit, and when nightfall stopped their further progress, they had carried the batteries in the suburbs and forced the gates of Belen and San Cosme. Early the next morning the city surrendered to General Scott, the federal government and the army having fled by night from its walls. Thus after five desperate battles in the valley of Mexico, with an army of only ten thousand men, General Scott entered this most ancient city in America, the seat of the Aztec empire, since the days of Cortez the splendid metropolis of the Spanish vice-royalty and now the capital of the Mexican republic, on whose fortifications the highest military science in the world had been exhausted, and which was held by an army of more than thirty thousand defenders.

In October following, Mr. Trist was recall-

ed. In December, 1847, the president in his message to congress, says: "I am satisfied that New Mexico and California should never be surrendered." "As Mexico refuses all indemnity, we should adopt measures to indemnify ourselves, by appropriating permanently a portion of her territory;" and he proposes without further ceremony, the establishment of territorial governments over those countries. He says: "To reject indemnity by refusing to accept a cession of territory, would be to wage war without a purpose or a definite object." "If we refuse this, we can obtain nothing else." And what is this for which indemnity is required? Why first, for the expenses of the war itself, and second, for the debt of Mexico to our citizens, the payment of which had been suspended on the annexation of Texas.

Suppose a victorious government at the close of such a war as this, to meet its humbled adversary in negotiation, and the latter should ask: 'What are the grievances for the redress of which you have carried on this contest?' Suppose that it should answer, 'our principal demand is for indemnity for the ex-

penses of the war.' The conquered would reply, 'that is of course merely incidental, but you desire redress, we suppose, for the wrongs on account of which the war was begun.' Suppose it should say, 'these are the demands of our citizens upon you, which you ceased two years before to pay according to agreement.' 'And is it for this.' O how would they exclaim, 'and is it for this, that you have killed our people, and ravaged our country, and impoverished our government, and now propose to dismember our territory? And can it be that you have even no excuse but this, for all the evils you are bringing on our land?'

O no, it was not for this. We will strip off this veil of indemnity with a few plain facts, and conquest will stand naked before us. In his message of December, 1847, the president says: "As the territory acquired might be of greater value than our just demands, our commissioner was authorized to stipulate for the payment of such additional pecuniary consideration as might be deemed reasonable." It will be recollected that the extreme limit prescribed to Mr. Slidell, was twenty-five millions of dollars for the whole, including Lower Califor-

nia. "Our just demands," as the president would estimate them, amounted to about eighty millions of dollars, and we were to pay to Mexico for the country, of course, its excess in value over this sum.

Mexico being entirely subdued, her army annihilated, her ports, her cities, her capital in our hands, and her means of resistance entirely at an end, finally consented to our terms of peace ; and after long negotiation a treaty was concluded at the city of Guadalupe Hidalgos, on the 2nd of February, 1848.

By this treaty, the country to the Rio Grande, New Mexico and Upper California, were ceded to the United States. In consideration of this territory, the United States contracted to pay to Mexico fifteen millions of dollars, and to discharge the latter from all liability to our citizens, assuming herself the payment of their claims. These amounted according to the computation of the executive, to five or six millions more. Lower California may be considered worth four or five millions of dollars. Then we gave for the country the largest price which Mr. Slidell had been authorized to offer, before a sword had been



drawn in the contest. Two-thirds of the expenses of the war had been incurred since Mr. Trist's appointment, and still the smallest "*indemnity*" which he was then authorized to receive, was found sufficient at its close.

Now in view of these facts, we ask impartial and reflecting men, what room there can be found to doubt that this war was carried on for the sole object, and with the undivided purpose of compelling Mexico to sell her territory to the United States; that money was nothing, blood was nothing, but the territory must be obtained.

There is a strange unity about the whole transaction, exhibiting an unwavering fixedness of purpose. In the instructions to Mr. Slidell, we see the original conception. This is followed by the conquest of the territory, with the determination first expressed in acts, and then avowed in words to keep it, Mexico willing or unwilling. Connected with this was the military occupation of the departments on the Rio Grande, "to be held as a means of coercing Mexico to just terms of peace." We quote the language of the executive. This not being sufficient, our army is sent through deso-



lation and blood to her capital, to compel acquiescence in the identical bargain first conceived, and inflexibly insisted on. Where now is "the indemnity for the past and security for the future," that thinnest subterfuge, under which it was ever attempted to conceal a national robbery?

When not a blow had been struck, when ten millions, and when fifty millions of dollars had been expended, when one thousand, and when twenty thousand lives had been sacrificed, when it was proposed to conquer a peace, and when it was proposed to purchase a peace, the same constant price was offered for the same territory, the same unvarying surrender was demanded.

The bargain and sale had no connection whatever with the war, except as the latter was the means of compelling the former. The war effected no other object but to extort from Mexico her consent to this transaction; and as our government was perfectly satisfied and even gratified with the result, announcing the "*honorable peace*" for which we had fought to be attained, we must conclude that it proposed to itself no other object. From this alterna-

tive there is no escape. Either this war was prosecuted solely to compel Mexico to sell her lands and their inhabitants at a predetermined price, or else its object remains as yet unattained. The blood and treasure of our people have been poured out like water either to effect an unjust conquest, or for a purpose which has never yet been accomplished.

We have thus presented as briefly as possible, the progress and objects of this war. Commenced in unjust aggression, it was prosecuted even to the end for no other object, but to possess ourselves of the territory of another republic against her will. A robbery in its inception, it maintained its character to the end. We are unable to contemplate without indignation and shame, this most unjust war, whose wickedness the splendor of its victories is insufficient to veil. Well and truly it was declared by a meeting of our citizens in the city of New-York, in 1845, as they read in the political heavens the signs of this remorseless purpose of our government, that war with Mexico would be "a war for conquest, an unjust war, a war in which the nation would be sustained by no sense of right, but condemned

by the unanimous voice of the civilized and christian world."

We have finished our review of the causes and conduct of this wicked and unjust wrong, in which the crime of our rulers involved our country. We shall now proceed to a view of its consequences.

CHAPTER XI.  

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THE Benefits of the War considered. The payment of the claims of our citizens against Mexico. The acquisition of territory. Value of this conquest to the United States, and to the cause of freedom.

LET us turn our eyes to the benefits of this conquest. Some of our citizens have cause for satisfaction at the certain and speedy payment of their claims against Mexico. These we suppose that the United States might have paid as well without bloodshed and the waste of other millions, as with them. The only other benefits which are said to have resulted from the war, so far as we have been able to learn, have been the acquisition of New Mexico and California, and the left bank of the Rio Grande. Executive imagination has summoned up a mighty nation on their hills, and in their valleys. We have seen in printed vision its waters white with the wings of commerce, and its fields laden with

the fruits of plenty—a new home opened to mankind, to freedom and to civilization—and all this by means of the Mexican war. This, the nation has been solemnly informed, constitutes indemnity for the past.\*

We have no disposition to doubt the truth of this prophecy. We hope and believe that some generation not far distant will witness its fulfillment. But another question presents itself, which is of considerable consequence in this connexion, and to which we are by no means so ready to yield our assent. Was the Mexican war necessary to the attainment of this result? For of course, if it was not, if this consummation would have been reached as well without the war, it cannot be regarded as its consequence, and constitutes no “indemnity for the past.”

We do not believe that there is an individual, who in the exercise of a sober and intelligent judgment, will say that the Mexican war was necessary in order to plant freedom on the shores of the Pacific, or in the valleys of New Mexico. The occupation of those countries

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\* President's answer to a resolution of the house of representatives. Congressional Globe 1847-8, page 990.

by a race of freemen, would under any circumstances have been inevitable. There did not exist before the war any reason to doubt such a result. We are familiar with the advance of our own race in these United States. Seventy years ago the Alleghanies were our western wall.

There is no conquest like that of the plow. The spoils of battle pass away generally with its victors, sometimes with its victims. But when the civilized and civilizing emigrant plants himself in a new country, its destiny is, in most instances, fixed forever. The tree of civilization roots itself deep in the soil, and in its turn bears fruit, and scatters its seed beyond.

The principle of democracy is the prominent feature in the character of this race. It has become an element of thought in the minds of men. It is not possible that a state should arise on our western coasts, which would not be governed according to the will of its inhabitants. There is no one who has seen the broad river of emigration sweep away the forest and its kings, who can say that when it has flowed on to the shores of the Pacific, its waters will



be less pure and fertilizing than they are to-day.

It is said, however, that without this war the United States might never have obtained possession of that country, that even if it had become a home of freedom, another nation might have arisen there. We confess that we should rejoice at the prospect of such a result. Such vast possessions are of no benefit to us as a nation. And on the other hand, if the rights of man were sure hereafter to be maintained in any event on those distant shores, as fully at least as they are here, of what consequence would it be to the citizens of those future states to be united under our particular organization. Some spirit other than the unselfish desire to extend the area of freedom must surely have prompted to this acquisition.

The day is passing away we trust, in which nations seek their gain in each other's loss. Who can doubt that a sister republic in that distant region, knit to us by blood and by social and political fellowship, would be so also by the bonds of peace and national attachment? Who can doubt that harmony and friendship would be borne from one to another

on the currents of their waters, that the iron hands which would unite their cities would bind their hearts to each other also, and that sympathies and thoughts would dart together over the network of their electric nerves? Who can doubt that while each would pursue its own domestic policy, a noble confidence and generosity would mark their intercourse, rejoicing in each other's welfare, and seeking each other's good.

But we can no more pretend to have attained to social and political than to individual perfection. Many are conscious that we are as yet very far from that end, and that our institutions, though the best undoubtedly that the world has ever seen, are but the imperfect work of imperfect beings. We can hardly suppose that the freemen of that region, with the light of our experience to guide them, would fail to improve upon our example. We say then, that if the acquisition of this territory is the only benefit attributable to the Mexican war, it has been productive of no good whatever.

But if this war was wrong in its beginning and continuance, the most splendid results, the

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greatest blessings following in its train would not change its character in the least. Though its effect had been to consecrate that region to freedom, and though without its agency, as far as human understanding can discover, it would have been doomed to despotism, these consequences would afford no extenuation of its criminality. As we read in all the events of history that there is a power above us, who, by an ordained and inevitable chain of causes and effects punishes national sins by national calamities, how can we dare to hope, that we or our children shall enjoy that of which we have despoiled another? How can we expect but that this ill gotten-possession will prove a curse to embitter our peace and to sap the foundations of our national prosperity.

CHAPTER XII.

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THE Evils attending the War. Its Expense. Its Loss of Life—in battle—by disease.

WE have viewed the meager credit of this war; let us now examine its debtor side in its account with humanity.

It is estimated that the war will have cost the United States, including the price paid for the ceded territory and when arrears are liquidated and pensions fully paid, at least one hundred millions of dollars. This is so much capital which has been accumulated by the industry and enterprize of the citizens of the United States almost entirely destroyed, as if it had been consumed in some vast conflagration. We say almost, because some part yet remains in permanent articles, useless however except for other wars, and some in the profits of contractors; but this amount is comparatively

very small. It is difficult for the mind to form an idea of so large a sum. According to Mr. Gallatin, it is equal to the aggregate value of all the buildings in the city of New-York, excluding the nominal value of the lots. The entire population of the United States is now about twenty millions. The sum thus wasted is then five dollars taken from every man, woman and child in the country. The number of voters in the United States does not vary much from three millions. This wickedness then has taken over thirty-three dollars from every voter in the land and destroyed it.

This sum judiciously expended would have made the most perfect and durable improvements in every river and harbor throughout the country; the blessing of which to commerce, and to large classes of our fellow citizens whose lives and property are exposed on our inland waters, it is not possible to estimate. A tenth part of this amount expended in the cause of science would have been a self-rewarding munificence, which spendthrifts are always too poor to exercise.

This sum would have established two hundred institutions of learning in the United

States, with endowments of half a million of dollars each, or four hundred with endowments of a quarter of a million each, sufficient to have furnished the best education, that noblest gift of one generation to another, gratuitously to two hundred thousand youth of our country every year forever. It was demonstrated in the senate of the United States, that one half of the expenses of this war, if invested in six per cent stocks, and the interest arising from it applied to the carrying out of a gradual and feasible system of colonization, would in fifty years exterminate the curse of negro slavery from our soil.

The wealth of the United States has been created almost entirely by the labor and enterprise of their citizens. The rapid increase and diffusion of our people have required that the capital which they have created should be converted into many other forms of more immediate necessity than money; as for instance, into buildings and the varied instruments of production. These wants of a state must be first supplied, before its circulating and available wealth can become abundant. In our more newly settled states, the wealth of the citizens



consists almost entirely in their farms and stock, houses and shops and tools and implements, while money is often hardly to be found. In the older parts of the country the case is different to a great extent, but even in our great mercantile cities the amount of circulating capital is no more than is necessary for the ordinary transaction of business. Wealth does not lie idle and unproductive, seeking in vain for investment; but all is needed and employed in the growing commercial and manufacturing transactions of the country. Government loans have been taken mostly in this country, and it is from this circulating capital exclusively that this vast amount has been drawn; and this in addition to the sum necessary for the regular administration of the government. Although foreign causes of an unhappy nature contributed to make this exaction less severely felt at first than it would have been under ordinary circumstances, still every department of business throughout our country has been crippled, and has endured a needless suffering for the want of money. This fact is best evidenced to those who are not familiar with commercial and manufacturing operations,

by the enormous rates of interest which capital commanded for a long time during and after the war, even in our commercial cities, reaching often from twelve to eighteen per cent. on long loans, and sometimes to three and even four per cent. a month on shorter time. It is truth at the unexampled energy of our people is rapidly recovering from the blow, and reproducing their wasted capital. But the wrong to them does not depend on their ability to recover from its effects.

The capital thus squandered is by far the smallest part of the pecuniary loss which this war has occasioned to our country. Upwards of one hundred thousand men were employed in various capacities in its prosecution. Supposing that each of these lost on the average, a year and a half, the value of their labor during that time reckoned at seventy-five cents a day, would have been thirty-three million dollars. If we lost, as we doubtless did, thirty thousand lives, and each life was shortened twenty years, this would make at the same rate a loss of one hundred and forty million dollars. And here we have a loss of more than one hundred and seventy million dollars in produc-

tive labor alone by the war. Thus this wrong has prevented the production of this vast amount of wealth, which our country would otherwise have come to possess.

We have resting upon us also an enormous public debt. On this the interest must be paid annually, and it will be the duty of government to extinguish the principal as rapidly as possible. To effect this it is probable that it will become necessary to impose duties on some articles now generally esteemed necessities of life, and to increase those already laid on others, and that for many years public undertakings of vital importance to many portions of our citizens and of interest to all, will necessarily be suspended.

But the destruction of the wealth, the injury to the production and the neglect of the peaceful interests of our country, are the least of the evils resulting from this conquest. There were fought during the war about thirty battles attended with great suffering and loss of life. This to our troops however, was but light indeed compared with the frightful ravages of disease. One of the Indiana regiments which left its native state a thousand strong, and

which never saw a battle, returned at the close of the war with less than four hundred in its wasted ranks. When General Childs took command of the garrison at Jalapa, eighteen hundred men lay sick in our hospitals in that city. At the city of Mexico, the deaths among our troops were much of the time one thousand monthly. On a parade when a certain company was called which had numbered over one hundred men, a single private answered to the call, its sole living representative. Around the castle of Perote alone, are three thousand graves of soldiers who perished by disease. They lie in that great burial place. Some in the excitement of battle fell instantly dead by some almost unfelt blow ; others perished under a multitude of wounds ; others still expired after hours, or days, or weeks of agonizing torment. Many thousands thirsting for distinction, who had left their homes with high hopes of glory on the battle field, sunk under the malignant pestilence, while thousands more dragged home their disfigured bodies, or returned to carry with them through life shattered constitutions and disease, or to hasten to their graves.

If there is a time above all others when the heart yearns for the presence of affection, when its voice falls like music on the ear, when the tender ministry of those we love is felt to be O!, how precious, and when its absence wrings the heart with the bitter pang of desolation, it is when we lie on the bed of suffering and feel the approach of death.

While we mourn for our own countrymen who fell victims to conquest, let us not forget those who fought against us, sacrificed by our wickedness. Even defenceless women and children did not always escape the horrors of the war. At the storming of Monterey, a young Mexican girl was seen carrying water to the wounded of both armies. The battle thickened around her, but with a heroic devotion she continued her pious ministry. As she hastened from one to another, binding up their wounds and allaying their intolerable thirst, she seemed some angel of mercy amid the scene of carnage, when a cannon ball snatched away her gentle spirit, and her life-blood flowed mingling with the water she had brought.

But who shall paint the agony of those who mourn a son, a father, a husband, a brother,

who can never return? To how many did the news of peace bring a joyful anticipation, doomed to darken into disappointment and despair. Where is the indemnity that shall atone for crushed affections? What price can pay for the lost treasures of the heart? It is a terrible responsibility to have added a mite to human suffering. By what great necessity can this war be justified?



## CHAPTER XIII.

THE Duty of the United States toward other nations enhanced by her position. Her duty to Mexico in particular. These duties violated by this War.

WE shall now examine the duty and true ambition and glory of the United States, and show the consequences of this violation of that duty upon the character of our people, and on the cause of religion and of freedom in our own land, and throughout the world.

It is a matter of doubt among many, whether impartial justice ought ever to be expected from a state, seeking its own interest and amenable to no law. This doubt appears well warranted by history, but no sound distinction can be drawn in morals between public and private obligation. A state is an ideal being. It does not act, it possesses no responsibility. It exists only in contemplation. What are

commonly called acts of the state are the acts of individuals.

The law of right and wrong is the *ultima ratio* of human action. It is the duty of man to do whatever the moral law declares to be right, and to refrain from doing what it declares to be wrong; and this for the single reason that one is right and the other wrong. To whatever office in the vast machinery of government a man may be called, whether it be to legislate or to administer the laws, he is bound to obey in that, as in every other situation, the same law of right. An individual accountability inseparable from his existence rests upon him still.

Is one a legislator, and through prejudice or passion or excitement, fails to raise his voice against injustice and wrong, or seeks not with an enlarged humanity the welfare of his race; is he a minister, and do selfishness and ambition mark his counsels; does he hold the highest authority of the land and direct in any respect the conduct of his country, and is not the good of all mankind his supreme desire—do not justice, mercy and peace guide his steps—does resentment ever drive away forgiveness

from him; is he a private citizen living in a land of individual influence, and has he ever raised his voice to require or approve at the hands of his government any but just and generous measures, his is the individual wrong.

There is not one law of duty to govern the conduct of men in private and another in public relations. There is no such thing as collective responsibility.

There are, moreover, many things which increase the responsibility of those engaged in the direction of public affairs. The wrongs which men commit in an official capacity admit often of no redress. There exists no power to enforce in legislatures or sovereigns obedience to justice. Their acts become, also, justifying precedents to those who follow them; for men too often derive their notions of right from wrongs which time has rendered venerable. They possess, besides, far larger opportunity of promoting the good, or increasing the misery of mankind. The consequences of their actions must be immeasurably greater than can follow those of any private citizen.

Governments sustain a twofold relation. They stand in the position of individuals

among other governments, and hence arise the same duties which devolve upon man in his intercourse with his fellow man. They are also the constituted protectors of their people, the guardianship of whose rights and interests is committed to their care.

Revelation supplying the imperfect teachings of conscience, presents to us its simple and sublime precepts, to govern the conduct of nation with nation, as well as that of man with man.

The institutions and precepts of men bear within them the evidence of their own fallibility and of the imperfection of their authors. Every race and every age is governed by those peculiar to itself, and often differing from each other as widely as do the habits and characters of men. The laws of one people are uncongenial with the dispositions, and unadapted to the wants of another. They change, moreover, with every passing generation. While they operate to mould society to some extent, they themselves in turn are moulded by it. The institutions and customs of one age are often too barbarous or too refined to suit the succeeding one. The laws of our fathers, so

far as they are merely the work of the human intellect, become obsolete, and pass away with the state of society out of which they grew, and to which they were adapted ; giving place to others, which at some future day perhaps will themselves be sought for only by the curious. The teachings of christianity when placed side by side with these, present a remarkable contrast. So simple that the mind of a child can comprehend it, so profound that the sage is never satisfied with its contemplation, applying to the minutest act, embracing in its comprehension all the affairs in which men can engage, adapted alike to every age of time, and to every circumstance and condition of man, the source of all that is good or durable in human institutions, so suited to the nature of our being, that happiness follows our obedience, and unhappiness our disobedience to its every dictate, the moral law stands alone, perfect and eternal, a part of the great unity of being, and revealing in its author the same infinite One who fashioned the nature and the soul of man.

This law must possess supreme authority over nations as well as individuals, and all hu-

man institutions should be founded upon it. The laws of nations are conventional. Obedience to them is entirely voluntary. Their authority should most of all, for this reason, be tested by the principles of the moral law, and usages should be disregarded, however sanctioned by authority or hallowed by age, which are not in conformity with its spirit.

It would be a work of supererogation to enter further into an examination of the principles which should govern the conduct of nations generally. These need only to be stated. The mind assents to them instinctively. They are moral axioms.

We shall in the following observations confine our view to the United States, and show how their obligations are heightened by their peculiar position.

We stand upon a political and moral eminence. Our government is undoubtedly the greatest and most prosperous republic that has ever existed, and we have attained a high rank among enlightened and virtuous nations. We are as it were, pioneers in political freedom and in individual elevation ; and we have acquired an influence in the affairs of the world



and over the thoughts of men, unprecedented in so brief a period. We are moreover removed beyond the entanglements of European politics, are unfettered by the precedents and usages by which the action of those states is so greatly controlled, and are but little effected either by their struggles or their diplomacy. We have no reasons of state opposed to the dictates of morality.

It would seem as if we were called upon by the possession of many advantages denied in the same degree to others, to exalt the standard of national morality. It would appear that we should not be contented in our intercourse with other nations to follow the principles by which monarchies were guided in a ruder age, to pay our blind homage to usages originating in, and adapted to a less enlightened time, and to aim only to square our conduct with these imperfect standards. "We have been raised up," says a distinguished statesman, "for high and noble purposes." We should seek to realize and to accomplish our mission.

Justice does not consist merely in conformity with the usages, or obedience to the regula-

tions of society. He whose highest principle is to drive no closer a bargain with his neighbor than is tolerated by the laws, is among the most contemptible of men. We should strive in our intercourse with other nations, to be actuated by a love of right and by a noble generosity; to have our actions inspired, as it were, with the spirit of equity. "Although the hazard of transient losses," said a late pure minded statesman, "may be incurred by a rigid adherence to just principles, no lasting prosperity can be secured when they are disregarded." It is so difficult for nations to be just, their actions are so entirely beyond control, and such is the blinding influence of interest, that we should set our standard of national conduct peculiarly high, conscious of the obstacles in the way of its attainment.

Nearly a century before the multitude in Gallilee listened to the sermon on the mount, the Roman orator uttered the sentiment which we have placed at the head of this essay. The most virtuous character of antiquity, his writings contain perhaps the noblest uninspired precepts which were ever taught to man.

“Not only,” he says, “is that declaration untrue which asserts that no republic can be governed without injustice, but this is most true, that without the highest justice no republic can be guided to permanent prosperity.” The word “*justitia*” is very comprehensive and cannot be rendered into English by any single expression. It embraces the several ideas of clemency, humanity and magnanimity, the very spirit of justice.

These words possess weighty import and solemn association. They were prophetic of the downfall of Rome. They come to us with awful warning from the portals of the tomb in which her liberties were buried.

“The mission of the United States,” says one of their best citizens, “is one of peace, of love and of good will to men.” To elevate the human race, by exalting the standard of individual intelligence and virtue, to still the storms of human passion, to inculcate the principles of equality, fraternity and peace among men, these should be the objects of our ambition, to set their example before the world, this is our true glory. While other nations might boast of their victories, we could then

feel that we had conquered ignorance, we had conquered vice, we had conquered ourselves. There is a glory purer than that which is shrouded in the smoke of the battle-field, it illumines the path of peace; there is a serener light than beams from the cannon's mouth, it plays around the head of virtue.

Wars unhappily become sometimes necessary. "The most sacred regard for justice and equity," says Mr. Calhoun, "and the most cautious policy, cannot always prevent them." Governments must sometimes defend by force the rights of their people. Some principle dearer than life may be invaded, wrongs may be committed which it would be ignoble to suffer and which force alone can prevent. Here the crime is with the aggressor. But it is a vast responsibility to determine upon a war; and justice, humanity and every precept of religion teach us, that it should only be done under a controlling necessity, and when every other means of security have been exhausted in vain.

Mexico is our sister republic. She has been aspiring to emulate our example, and endeavoring, though with unequal steps, to follow in

our path. She is moreover a weaker nation than the United States. Her government is feeble and distracted, her people are generally ignorant and devoid of enterprize. By the silent operation of natural causes, our race has been silently but resistlessly encroaching on the Spanish-American. It is evident that it must yield before our advance. It would be contrary to all our ideas to imagine Mexico obtaining extensive trading privileges among our citizens, or acquiring in any manner possession of our territory. The tendency of things is all the other way. In every transaction we must be the gainer and she the loser. No blame attaches to us on this account. It is a fact whose cause lies beyond the reach of any political policy.

But while it is our duty to cultivate with all nations the relations of friendship, to exercise that regard for the rights of others, which is the best security for our own, and to exhibit that magnanimity which is the foundation of the highest respect; these circumstances would seem to require that our conduct toward Mexico should have been marked by an extraordinary forbearance and kindness. Surely we

should bear with the pride or the jealousy of a feebler nation, which is conscious of our growth at her expense, from causes beyond her power as well as our own to control, and pointing to consequences which she can only deprecate, but can neither avert nor stay.

"I trust," said Mr. Calhoun, in March, 1846, "that we shall deal generously with Mexico, that we shall prove ourselves too magnanimous and too just to take advantage of her feeble condition." We cannot resist quoting a few words from the remarks made by a senator from Kentucky, on the receipt of the war message from the executive, because they contain true and noble sentiments, which could hardly be so well expressed in other language.

"From the first struggle for liberty in South America and Mexico," says he, "it was the cherished policy of the United States to extend to those republics sympathy and friendship.

"We had regarded their rising as an imitation of our example—as a new creation of republics united by strong affinity and warm sympathy. That was the kind and generous view taken. As the head of the republican



system, our policy was to cheer and cherish them, and lead them in the way to that liberty which we had established, and of which we had set the example. Now we find ourselves in a state of war with one of these republics. We, that should naturally be looked up to as the protector of them all. These generous dispositions are all vanished, and war and bloodshed have taken their place. It is not in the amount of precious blood that has been shed, that the importance of this event consists. No, it is the great political consequences, the evil example to liberty in every place. The hand of one republic is stretched out in hostility against another! And I deprecate it the more when I reflect, that the one is feeble and impotent, that anarchy and revolutions have consumed her strength, and that she needs the force of our example and aid to sustain her, lest she fall back again into that monarchy from which we saw her with pleasure arise. The course that has been pursued cannot have been that generous and forbearing policy which ought to be exercised by this great republic. We

are so much mightier than they are, that our condescension would be noble."

In the war which we have examined, we see all these principles entirely disregarded. Impelled by a lust of conquest, the United States have exhibited in it a spirit of injustice, aggression and violence. The war which they have waged has been for the redress of no wrong, for the vindication of no human right. No principle of humanity is claimed to have been maintained by its victories. Nor are we entitled to any respect for the peace which followed. The same remorseless selfishness inspired alike its beginning, its continuance and its end.

Without a cause worthy of a civilized nation, or an object the hope of whose attainment could inspire devotion, its history does not present a single circumstance which can excuse or palliate its unmitigated wrong. Possessing no pretence of any moral aim, utterly at variance with every object for which the heart of this age has sympathy, men must gaze upon it only in sorrow, unillumined by a ray of faith or hope.

## CHAPTER XIV.

THE Influence of this War upon our national character, and on the cause of Liberty and of Christianity at home and abroad. It has introduced crime and vice among us. It has awakened a spirit of conquest. It has lowered the standard of public morality in our country.

THE evil impulses of our nature constitute a law of selfishness, which prompts man to seek his own interest or gratification, regardless of the happiness or rights of others, and of hatred which impels him to seek the positive evil of his fellow men. Of all the unhappy consequences which attend the exercise of selfish or hateful passions, the most certain and terrible are those which revert upon the character of their possessor. These seem to follow their indulgence by a fixed and eternal moral law, in the same manner that certain effects follow certain causes in the material world; by a necessity of the same nature as that by which the felled tree falls to the

ground, or the parts of a revolving body tend from their center. They are the parents of fear, of suspicion, of envy and unsatisfied desires. As the mind passes under their subjection, every generous voice is hushed, every noble prompting is stilled within it, its faculty of distinguishing right and wrong becomes deadened and distorted, and it looses the capacity for participating in the happiness of virtue.

We would expect to find the evil consequences of this great national wrong which revert upon the character of our people, on the cause of free governments, and on the interests of morality and religion, insidious in their nature, to be far more unhappy, as they are more enduring, than any others which can attend or follow it. So indeed they are.

This war has introduced crime and vice among us. A camp is the notorious home of unbridled passions. Soldiers in a foreign country feel that they are removed from all the restraints of civil law, and whenever the barrier of military discipline can be passed, unrestrained indulgence is sure to be sought. No one can know, until he has witnessed it,

the hardening influence of war upon the characters of those who are engaged in it. He, who under the name of glory can coolly blow out the brains of his fellow man, or urge a bayonet into his bosom, has taken a lesson in blood, the effects of which he has rarely the ability or disposition to shake off. When the heart has become regardless of human misery, when it is steeled against the cry of agony and the prayer for life, it is also proof against the entrance of most noble sentiments and elevating impulses. Soldiers are commonly drawn from that class of society who most need the checks of civil law. Having been removed from its authority for a time, it is difficult for them to assume again the character of peaceable citizens. Martial law no longer holding them in restraint, they are too apt to feel a spirit of reckless defiance. And this inhumanity and lawlessness are scattered over the land. Its breath is infection, its touch is contagion. It breeds a moral miasma in every community which comes within its influence.

This war has excited and encouraged among our people the spirit of conquest in which it had its origin. It is difficult for a people, as



for an individual, to be convinced that their own desires and actions are unhallowed and unjust. Vice is the most cunning of flatterers. It lulls its victim to security with a song of his own virtue and inability to err, while it holds its temptation before him under the veil of some excellent or glorious name. Desire harbored for a moment, invents a thousand plausible excuses for its gratification, until we are convinced that its indulgence is hardly inconsistent with the severest morality. Arrayed in the garments of virtue, vice often dares to appeal even to our sense of duty, and we strive to believe that we should be guilty of wrong in refusing to obey its impulses.

But if we ever free ourselves from the deceiver, we shall find that as far as we have followed it, just so far every moral sense has become deadened within us, and virtue herself has lost her beauty in our eyes.

Let us not attempt to deceive ourselves. The lust of conquest has begun to rage among us. It is called "making room for the Anglo-Saxon race," "working out our manifest destiny," and "enlarging the area of freedom." It has assumed a garb of the noblest humanity,



and has covered its face with a mask of wonderful virtue. But it is the spirit of conquest still. It is nothing else but the selfish desire to possess that which belongs to another, and a recklessness of the means by which it may be obtained. Let us reason together, candid reader, whether this is so.

Does our race need room? The area of our country before the war was about eighteen hundred thousand square miles, capable of sustaining a population of at least three hundred million souls. This is a moderate estimate. Its capacity is probably much greater. Vast regions of this country are as yet almost unexplored. We are barely twenty millions scattered over a part of its surface.

But it is our duty we are told to provide for posterity. Should our population continue to double once in thirty years as it is now doing, in one hundred and twenty years we should reach three hundred and twenty millions. But any one who reasons upon this basis will fall into a great mistake. Of course, were this reasoning correct, in thirty years from that time we should number six hundred millions, more than the continent would probably sup-

port, and in another short thirty years we should be double that number, or more by one-third than the number of inhabitants now on the globe. It is more probable that in five hundred years this country will hardly contain three hundred million souls. It is a law of population, that as a people become dense they multiply more slowly, until at last the increase is scarcely perceptible, as in China. No one imagines that the population of the globe will in sixty years have increased fourfold. The earth could not sustain such swarms, and ere long men would perish of universal starvation. We have heretofore increased rapidly, because we were a young people, scattered over a great and attractive country. Probably the early colonists on our coasts often doubled their numbers in a few months. How does this mist, in which a spirit of selfish aggrandizement has shrouded itself, fade away before the sunlight of truth.

But it is truly said that it is our duty to provide for posterity. The provision which we should make for them should not be vast regions of the earth which they will not need, and which must be acquired by injustice and wrong.

We should bequeath to them an unsullied national character. Our conduct must be the example for their imitation. Happy would that people be which could look back over their history through a long succession of just and generous actions which their fathers had performed, all whose precedents had tended to elevate while they adorned humanity. We should provide for them a higher intellectual culture than has been bestowed upon us, and should develope in them a more exalted moral character than as a nation we now possess. These would constitute the greatest wealth, the most glorious inheritance that posterity could receive at our hands.

In our own proper heritage are exhaustless resources yet to be developed. Far above us is a civilization yet to be attained, a standard of national character yet to be striven after. There lie the true objects of our ambition, in their attainment consists our true glory. Thus should we be working out truly our manifest destiny ; this would be indeed enlarging the area of freedom.

The United States appear to have acted on the assumption that they possess some divine

right to whatever is most valuable on this continent, especially if it belongs to a weaker power. For instance, it was urged in congress before the war, that we must obtain possession of the harbor of San Francisco. It was not claimed that we had any title to it whatever, it was acknowledged to be an undisputed possession of Mexico. But it was said, it is the best harbor on the Pacific. And were not the rights of Mexico sacred? The feeling in this country seems to be, we will willingly foster that young republic, but she must learn to be satisfied with those possessions which we do not want. If she is so unreasonable as to oppose our wishes, we must obtain what we desire by force, and punish such unheard of presumption.

But do not let us flatter ourselves that the high sounding appellations which have been employed to tickle the ears of this people while selfish ambition was obtaining dominion over their hearts, are original with us. They have been the themes of every conqueror, both king and republic, since the world began. There never lived a scourge of the human race who confessed himself a villain. All

have been in turn persuaded that the submission of nations to their rule was necessary for their own good, that they had been sent on a mission of mercy to suffering humanity.

Alexander and Cæsar, Attila and Tamerlane, all felt the necessity of room for their respective races, and were doubtless filled with a desire to work out their manifest destiny, and enlarge the area of freedom. Napoleon was the very self-styled child of destiny.

This war has encouraged in the minds of our countrymen the desire of military glory for its own sake. It has tended to dissatisfy them with the comparatively noiseless pursuits of peace, and has created a longing for the excitement of battle, and the applause which follows victory.

A prominent supporter of the war declared in the United States senate, that "Europe had almost forgotten us, until our battles on the Rio Grande woke her up." We had been peopling a wilderness and developing its exhaustless resources, digging canals and building railroads, thousands of keels were plowing our inland waters, we were sending thought instantaneously to every extremity of the land, our commerce



had become the second on the globe, we were triumphantly teaching and developing the great principles of freedom, our country was smiling in the dawn of universal education. And could statesmen be found among us fomenting discontent, because we did not attract sufficiently the gaze of Europe? Must we engage in an accursed wrong for the sake of notoriety?

And again it was declared by the same senator: "Let modern philanthropists talk as they will, the instincts of nature are truer than the doctrines they preach. Military renown is one of the great elements of national strength, as it is one of the proudest sources of gratification to every man who loves his country."

This declaration is worthy of the cause in support of which it was uttered. Its morality deserves our especial attention. The teachings of christianity are passed by unnoticed. The fundamental principles of moral science are entirely lost sight of. By a figure of speech similar to that by which national robbery is softened into manifest destiny, the wicked passions of man are exalted to "instincts of nature," and before this modern Baal the free-



men of America are called upon to bow, and offer to it their blind adoration. A citizen standing in a high place before this country thus teaches his fellow countrymen to abandon every other principle of action, and submit to the guidance of the instincts of nature.

But irrespective of the character of the war, the facts of having woke Europe up, and of having obtained a military renown, are presented as sufficient reasons why we should be gratified with it. If we had gained nothing else, say its supporters, these should constitute a source of exultation. Now we submit that no result of a war can be a sufficient cause of exultation, the prospect of whose attainment would not be a sufficient reason for undertaking a war. Then the hope of military renown is a sufficient reason to induce a civilized nation to commence a war; a doctrine abhorrent to the common sense of humanity.

Whenever men are gratified with a bargain they are in the same proportion eager to make a similar one. If it is considered that military renown and the satisfaction of having woke Europe up, have been cheaply purchased by the war, and that this result is so much in our

favor that it affords matter for congratulation, the desire must follow to purchase the same advantage so cheaply again. It is impossible that a nation can be gratified with an unjust war or conquest, without having its appetite sharpened for another. Appetite indulged is appetite unchained.

Every desire of the heart which it is right to gratify at all, it is right to gratify for the mere enjoyment which its gratification affords. Desires are not to be judged of by the effects of their gratification. They are innocent or vicious in themselves, and if their indulgence is proper at all, they may be indulged for their own sake.

Now no one will contend that the desire for military glory may be indulged for its own sake, that it is right to gratify this "instinct of nature" merely for the pleasure that attends its gratification. No, this is the doctrine for the practice of which we call men savages. Civilized nations do not, dare not go to war for the mere delight of fighting. There never lived a conqueror who dared to avow his passion for blood, or who did not seek to cloak his impulses under a garb of humanity. Therefore,

as the gratification of this desire for its own sake is pronounced infamous by the common consent of mankind, we class the desire itself among the unhallowed passions of the breast, whose exercise must be a source of evil to the human race, and whose indulgence and cultivation christian philanthropists should unite to condemn, and christian governments should labor to avoid.

The nation which rejoices over a victory won in a doubtful cause, just so far indulges and cultivates a love of war for its own sake.

If war is waged in support of some great principle of freedom, for the vindication of the rights of man, it is fit that we watch its progress with interest, and that we rejoice over its success. Love for our race bids us be glad in the faith that this trampled and bruised body of humanity will be raised up and healed. So if a treason against the government is discovered and its actors are condemned and executed, we rejoice at the preservation of the state. But while we acknowledge the justice of the punishment, we sympathize with the unhappy beings who must suffer the penalty of the law, and lament the necessity that dic-

tates their doom. While then we exult at the triumphs of humanity, and indulge in the cheering prospect of the elevation of our race, our joy should be saddened by the remembrance of the evil and suffering through which this good must be obtained, and which the sternest necessity alone is sufficient to justify. But when war itself is sought for, irrespective of any good which it may subserve, when victories are themes of rejoicing to men, careless of the cause in which they were won, it is like the idle multitude indulging their passion for human suffering in the sight of an execution, careless whether the victim has been justly or unjustly condemned, thoughtless whether justice and the laws are sustained or disregarded. O! how devoid of love for his race is that man, and how perverted and degraded is his moral sense, who regardless of its suffering, its evil and its awful wrong, can rejoice and exult over a battle, merely because his own nation has shown her physical superiority over another. How contemptible does this spirit become, when it glories over the overthrow of a foe far weaker than ourselves, even like an infant in our grasp. Is there no higher national ambi-

tion than this? Is there no better, no nobler glory for a people than supremacy on the battle field? Ah, yes. True wisdom rejoices when battles are not fought, when victories are not won. It looks upon war as a terrible evil only to be justified as a last resort against oppression and wrong, and when not waged in the cause of freedom, with all its magnificent pomp and circumstance, to be but murder, without the poor excuse of anger, that temporary madness.

The lust of conquest and the desire of war for its own sake, the most wicked passions which can enter the minds of a people are the greatest curses of any state, and most of all of a republic.

Says Cicero, speaking in the imperial city, whose glory was in her conquests, and which had already attained the empire of the known world, "But if we would make a just estimate of the case, we should find both greater and more glorious actions done by wisdom at home, than by arms abroad." "Happy," says Montesque, "is that people whose annals are tiresome."

Wealth destroyed is quickly reproduced,



there comes always an end to human suffering and sorrow, generations soon arise to fill the places of the dead.

These are not the consequences of war over which mankind have had most cause to mourn. It deadens and degrades the moral sense of man, and destroys his perception of national and individual justice. He who sees no wrong in despoiling a weaker state of her possessions, is restrained only by the laws of his country and the frown of society from robbing his neighbor of his wealth. Evil propensities exhibit themselves the same under all circumstances. There is no distinction between public and private virtues and vices. If the foundations of justice are sapped, public and private principles are weakened alike.

War has kindled and fanned the flame of human passion. It has tended powerfully to deaden the finer and nobler sentiments of the soul, to drive from the heart the feelings of humanity, and to destroy in man the impulse to love his fellow man. It has developed and cultivated selfishness and hatred in all their forms. Impulses to evil, once excited, cannot be confined in their operation to the



objects which aroused them. They become a part of the character, to be exhibited at all times, to be exercised under all circumstances. Peace is harmonious. Where it is destroyed among nations, it cannot exist in smaller communities, nor between man and man; there is war even among the tenants of the same bosom.

These lusts have opposed morality by cultivating every vice. They have been the deadliest foes of christianity, for they have awakened every passion whose exercise its precepts forbid, and which its persuasions seek to still. They tend to deaden every impulse the cultivation of which is the end of religion, and in the exercise of which consists the happiness of mankind.

These desires for conquest and military glory, in which this war had its origin and which it has encouraged, and whose gratification is the greatest crime which a nation can commit, not only have scattered immorality and vice among us, have tended to degrade our national character, to destroy the sense of national and individual justice, and develop evil passions among our people, and thus op-

posed the principles of christianity; but they have impaired, more than any other influence can, the foundation of our liberties. The cause of freedom has no other foe so much to be dreaded, whose approach is so insidious, whose triumph is so sure.

Liberty must be founded on equality and fraternity. It must be established in a common sympathy, it must rest on a love of all mankind, or it can have no secure foundation. Perfect liberty can never exist without perfect fraternity, or unless the divine command is obeyed and every man love his neighbor as himself. Liberty then in its best form among men, must be imperfect, and whatever tends to stop or interrupt the current of sympathy between men, must tend to its destruction.

Now selfishness, jealousy, anger and hatred, are not generally the consequences of external causes. They exist in the heart itself. Where they exist they are constantly seeking, and they rarely fail to discover opportunities for their exercise. In a republic like ours, it surely becomes us to fear the consequences of their development and cultivation, by means such as these. We should tremble lest when there

were no more conquests to be made, and no more foes to overcome, the same evil passions, now become a part of our national character, should seek their exercise in domestic commotion, should array the parts of our glorious Union in hostility against each other, and by their silent but resistless progress effect the downfall of American liberty.

Let us not feel that our liberties are so strong that no force can prevail against them. "The sentinel may" *not* "sleep securely on his post." Imperfect man cannot guard too watchfully his imperfect work from ruin. "Best safety lies in fear." "Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty." We may fear no outward assault. We may liken ourselves to some proud cliff that overhangs the sea, and around whose base the billows dash and roar in vain, while it looks in towering grandeur on the wild war of waters beneath; but if we guard not well the approaches of this insidious foe, coming generations may liken us to the same rock, in which the tiny insect had been laboring unseen, perforating and weakening its foundation, until it could no longer sustain the overhanging brow, when suddenly the landmark which had gui-

ded the mariner to his port is swallowed up forever by the waves. The warrior who had fought all day in battle unharmed, whose armor of proof had warded off every blow, and whose arm had vanquished every adversary, weary and faint lays himself down on the battle field at night, and while he sleeps the still falling dew comes through the joints of his harness, its damp, deadening influence pervades every nerve and channel of his frame, and he awakes to disease, delirium and death.

Let us take warning by republics that have ceased to be. It was no thunderbolt from Heaven that dashed their power in pieces. It was no earthquake that overthrew their cities. Their work of ages fell not in a day, nor did external force accomplish their destruction. It was the slow, certain moral consumption engendered by war and conquest, working in every individual of those states, and decaying the foundations of their strength. Athenians, doubtless, loved their liberties as well as we; but when public virtue is lost, when public justice is disregarded, when no noble magnanimity is exhibited, and peace and the love of humanity are not cultivated by the state, they cannot

long be found in the great mass of its citizens. Thus it was with Athens, and Philip's gold could purchase those liberties which the armies of Persia had been hurled against in vain.

We may exclaim as Hazael to the prophet, is thy servant a dog that he should do this great thing! A careless self-confidence is the surest omen of the fall of virtue. The lust of conquest and of blood is a craving which never cries enough, whose appetite is only sharpened by that on which it feeds. They who had conquered the world could not rest. When her victories had bore Rome to such a pitch of splendid degradation that spectacles of human agony and blood could alone satisfy even her female sex, when the stern virtue of the republic was gone, and there were no more nations in the known world to conquer, the arms of her legions were turned against each other. Her lieutenants fought among themselves for the dictatorship and the imperial purple, the blood of her children was shed in her streets, proscription sent her most virtuous and noble citizens to death, and the empire was sold by the army for gold. Then only was it that the strength of the barbari-



ans could force her defences of "ancient renown and disciplined valor." Then only did the flames of invasion blacken the vineyards of Italy, and the glory of Rome follow her liberties to the tomb.

Our liberties were too costly to be lost by injustice and wrong. The cause of humanity is too dear to be thus sacrificed to unhallowed ambition. If we would avoid the fate of Rome, let us not commit her crimes, let us not despise her warning voice.

Peace is pre-eminently the policy of a free people. Men longing for the establishment of freedom throughout the civilized world, look to us in confidence that we will not fail nor falter in its cause. Universal peace must co-exist with universal freedom. Founded in the same principles of the love of humanity and an enlarged sympathy, they are incapable long of separate existence, each is necessary to the other. It is the office of freedom to establish peace. Peace alone can perpetuate freedom. War and despotism are kindred curses. Liberty and peace should smile upon mankind together. Truly is our mission one of peace and good will to man. Liberty must be obtained by stern con-



flict with oppression. The highest justice and humanity can alone preserve it. Moreover it is only by the exercise of these national virtues that we can present an example of freedom to the world so attractive to man, that before its influence thrones will crumble and their bulwarks melt away.

True patriotism is something widely different from that blind and thoughtless enthusiasm which cries my country right or wrong, which is fit to be made the instrument of designing ambition, but is unworthy to control the conduct of a free people. It knows no interest of its country opposed to the cause of humanity. It sees no good in any thing which must be obtained by wrong. It loves its country too much silently to see it invading the sacred rights of others. It is a brave thing. It cannot be compelled to hold its peace, when its government engages in acts of injustice and wrong.

Let us then as a nation banish from our minds these restless passions, which must conquer us, unless we rise and conquer them. Let us exercise our ambition and seek our glory in the cultivation of peace, and in the attainment of

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a nobler and higher civilization. Let us look for our prosperity in the paths of tranquility, and strive to establish our liberties in exalted justice and love and good will to man.

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CHAPTER XV.

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OF the establishment of permanent peace among civilized nations. The means by which this object can be attained. The necessity which will justify a nation in resorting to arms. Prospect of the triumph of peace.

THE ancient heathen poets, chroniclers of the earliest periods of the past, record the wonders of a golden age in times anterior to their own; when man, clothed with the majesty of the celestial, gazed with undrooping eye upon the radiant forms of the immortals, and listened in free intercourse to the divine oracles that fell from their lips. But toward the void of coming ages their imagination seems never to have directed its flight.

The Roman sang of that age when Saturn in his divinity walked on earth, and cast over their land a verdure, and over their sky a brilliancy which yet bloomed in its fertile plains, and lingered in its balmy air and in its deep

blue heavens, faint tokens of the former glorious presence of Deity.

The Grecian loved to sing of the earth as it was when Orpheus tamed ferocity by the strange enchantment of his lyre; when through glade, by waterfall, "beneath the glassy noon-tide and under the silver stars," beings of celestial form and beauty were seen to walk, and every grove and every fountain was rendered lovely by the guardianship of the Naiad and the Fawn.

The Persian in the rich coloring of oriental fancy, describes a scene lovely as Paradise—when Ormuzd held dominion over earth and ocean, when the Houri fanned a balmy air with lulling plumes, trod with tinkling feet on emerald turf, and reposed in quiet beauty beneath a rose-colored sky, and the Peri sent up strange, ravishing melodies from the coral depths of its ocean home.

But the harp of the christian poet in that distant age was struck to a nobler song.

The past had indeed themes for him far above all that heathen imagination could frame. For him God had created the heavens and the earth, had said "let there be light, and

there was light," had fixed to the sea its bound. For him, man had dwelt in the beauty of innocence in a garden planted by the hand, and made glorious by the presence of the Lord. For him the bow of promise had been set in the clouds by the same Almighty One who in awful displeasure had brought a flood of waters upon the earth, and beneath whose judgment of fire the smoke of the cities of the plain "went up as the smoke of a furnace."

For him his fathers had been made to pass on dry land through the midst, while "the flood stood upright as an heap, and the depths were congealed in the heart of the sea." For him Jehovah had descended to earth, and with thunderings and lightnings and thick darkness and the voice of a trumpet had declared his law to man, while Sinai quaked at the presence of its God.

But nothing of all the past did he sing. His was a yet grander theme. In inspired vision the veil of the future had been lifted before him. He had heard from immortal lips the glad tidings of peace on earth and good will to men. He had beheld the exalted destiny of his race. He had witnessed the glorious spread

of that spiritual kingdom which shall extend "from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth."

Forgetting at once the present and the past, his rapt spirit passes into the deep bosom of the future, and beyond the shores of time, and in language most sublime breaks forth into rejoicing song.

The Hebrew prophets point forward to a distant time when man should attain his highest earthly development and happiness, and this they always represent as an age of peace. They employ the highest language of poetry, and the grandest imagery, to describe that reign of the Prince of Peace, when we are told that "the Lord will break the bow and the sword and the battle out of the earth, and will make them to lie down in safety;" "men shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks, nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more;" "violence shall no more be heard in thy land, wasting nor destruction within thy borders;" "the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid, the calf, the young lion and the



fatling together, and a little child shall lead them."

Since these prophecies were uttered, nearly three thousand years have elapsed. They yet remain entirely unfulfilled. No nation has ever exhibited to the world an example of the practice of peace. Indeed the condition of society has been such in every age, that no single state could, consistently with its own safety and with justice to its citizens, have neglected at any time its means of defence, or avoided always the calamities of war.

The earth has been continually filled with the noise and the blood of battle. Civilization has exhibited its superiority over barbarism not in avoiding war, but in perfecting its science. Still the believer in inspiration cannot doubt that the age of universal peace, so plainly foretold, will surely come.

Can we now discern in the horizon of time, the signs of its coming? Can we indulge the reasonable hope that its dawn will be in our day? What are the means by which it can be hastened? These are great practical questions which involve the highest interests of hu-

manity. They are questions which a true philosophy is adequate to solve.

This and this alone can direct aright the efforts of philanthropy, and point out the true means on which the peacemaker may rely for ultimate success. This can read in history the confirmation of prophecy, and discern in the past the auguries of the future. This can tell the lover of his race how and how alone peace on earth can be attained, and from its mountain top can signal to the multitude in the valleys when to watch for the dawn of its glorious morning.

Let us first inquire, then, if perchance we may discover what are the means by which permanent peace among civilized nations, whenever it shall be attained, must be brought about. What are the influences, what are the motives in which and in which alone lies that great power to induce enlightened states to disband their armies, to convert their navies to the use of peaceful, friendship-strengthening commerce, to dismantle their fortresses and dock-yards, to abandon war to the barbarian and the brute, and establish their intercourse

on the principles of justice, humanity and peace?

Are there any means of which we can say, whenever peace on earth shall be established, by these and by these alone must it be done? We believe that there are.

All reasons which can be urged against the practice of war are embraced in these four; its cost, direct and indirect; the suffering and loss of life that it occasions; its injurious effects upon society; its wickedness. The first three of these it will be perceived are consequences of war, the last is its character, as the act of moral beings.

The third reason which we have mentioned can hardly be included among arguments by which nations are to be influenced to peace. The unhappy effects of war upon the character of society, though undoubtedly the greatest of all its evils, are not palpable to the sense, are silent and almost unperceived in their operation, and their results, especially when withstood by counteracting influences, are slowly worked out through many generations. It is impossible that these should be appreciated by the mass of mankind, they are

fully realized by but very few. They may therefore be properly omitted in our examination.

From the days of the good St. Pierre, humane men have been laboring to persuade nations to peace, by portraying the horrors of war. The resources of language seem to have been exhausted in presenting startling pictures of its sacrifice of life, the amount of suffering which it occasions, the homes and hearts which it makes desolate.

In this economical age, philosophers who are endeavoring to solve the great problems of society, have attempted to compute the cost of war, and we hear the result in sums whose aggregate is almost beyond the reach of numbers.

To the presentation of these arguments against war, drawn from its consequences, the labors of many good men have been and are now directed; but history proves to us that these have little if any effect to deter a brave people, or an ambitious government from its prosecution.

The past and the present unite in testimony to this truth, that the power of numbers and

language might be exerted till the end of time in demonstrating the wastefulness and portraying the horrors of war, and were no other influence employed to prevent, its examples would not cease to multiply.

If we seek in the philosophy of our nature for an explanation of this fact which is so plainly taught in history, we shall find abundant reason why this is and ever must be so.

As war is universal among men, we must seek for its causes among the common impulses of humanity. We find them in these three; hatred, selfishness and the passion for excitement. The first is its most frequent cause in those ruder forms of society where passion is unrestrained and men have but little to be selfish of. The second is its exciting motive among civilized nations. These assume various forms of development, but all the same in essence. Every war recorded in history has been prompted on the part of one combatant at least, by some motive directly referable to selfishness or hatred.

The passion for excitement is common to every state of society, and finds in war its highest gratification. Quickened into activity as



the rumor or the anticipation of war flies from mouth to mouth through a nation, it makes men blind to the wrongs which they have committed, it magnifies the injuries which they have received, it conjures up a thousand which have never existed; for the multitude, who even in a free country can rarely give a single intelligent reason why they are engaged in war, it invents a thousand why their foe deserves neither pity nor forbearance, it cries to men that their national honor, something of which they generally have a very indefinite idea, is at stake, it snatches away their reason.

Nor must we overlook the influence of the pomp and circumstance and splendor with which war is invested, not of the doctrine, handed down from the remotest antiquity and implicitly received by millions, and lately presented in the United States senate\* as a political axiom, that military renown is the foundation of national glory, and the proudest source of gratification to every man who loves his country.

Nations as a general rule believe their quarrel to be right.

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\* See speech of Lewis Cass, Congressional Globe, 1847-8, page 87.



It is a principle of rabble nature eagerly to believe every falsehood which may be invented to support their side of a dispute, and with equal vehemence to deny and ridicule all statements of their adversary. Thus it happens, that whatever the truth may be, or whatever doubts those who reflect may afterwards come to entertain, a nation hardly ever enters upon a war without feeling a sense of injury and a conviction that its cause is just.

Let him who doubts this, consider the feeling which pervaded the mass of the American people at the commencement of the war with Mexico, certainly one of the most unjust and causeless outrages, on the part of our government, ever perpetrated by a civilized people. Let him remember how few there were, who in the excitement of that hour dared to doubt the righteousness of our cause, and the duty of every patriot to bid it God speed, and how their feeble voice was lost in the shout of the nation.

Moreover the feelings excited by the consequences of war are themselves fleeting, and incapable of producing on most minds a permanent impression. It may be questioned wheth-

er the sympathy for suffering excited by the view or the description of a great battle is not well nigh lost in the enthusiasm and sense of sublimity inspired by marshaled armies and their magnificent array, the skillful combinations and varying fortune of the field, the shock of charging hosts over the trembling earth and amid the thunder of the cloud, the whirlwind of pursuit and the shouts of victory.

In these, then, passion and selfishness, self-justifying popular enthusiasm and love of excitement, the thirst for military renown, the fear of national shame, in these lie the causes of war; these are the foes within itself, against which humanity must contend. Can they be overthrown, can their influence upon the conduct of nations be destroyed by arguments drawn from the consequences of war?

These teach us only that war is a political evil. They show it to be a vast expense, an injury to commerce and to peaceful arts, and a waste of blood and life. Beyond this they can teach us nothing. Of its nature as a moral act they leave us profoundly ignorant. All our notions concerning the moral character of war will be found on examination to be deriv-

ed from sources entirely different. From the fact that a certain act, we are ignorant what, caused suffering or loss of property or of life, we cannot conclude that that act was wrong. For all that we yet know it might have been wrong to have refrained from its commission. We demand first to know what the act was, and then from its nature, irrespective of its consequences, we determine its quality as right or wrong.

The mass of men believe that it is glorious to triumph in battle; the consequences of war, teaching it only to be a political evil, cannot effect that belief. They are powerless to destroy the excuses which selfishness and the desire of excitement frame to justify their gratification.

Lies there then in this truth that war is a political evil the power to effect its abolishment. Can this counteract the influence of its splendor and the desire for military renown? Is this truth, if universally admitted, able to calm the enthusiasm of a people, to induce them to forego the gratification of this most intense passion for excitement, and refrain from engaging in a war which they believe to be

just, to persuade them to disobey what they esteem the voice of patriotism, and leave unvindicated their country's honor, which they believe can only be maintained by arms?

The question suggests its own answer. There have been struggles in which it was the duty of men to engage, from which it would have been a crime to shrink. There is a necessity which when it arises will justify the appeal to arms. The consequences of war furnish a very erroneous principle by which to determine what this necessity is. For, viewed as a political evil, political necessity, it must be admitted, will justify a resort to it.\* Every state must be the judge of this necessity in its own case, and where is the nation that ever rushed, however blindly, into a contest which it did not persuade itself was necessary?

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\* The term political necessity is commonly used in a loose and indefinite sense, and is perhaps incapable of a precise definition. A mere evil to society may rightly be incurred when it becomes necessary for the attainment of a greater good. The propriety or wrong of incurring the evil is determined solely by the answer to the utilitarian question, will it or will it not effect a greater good. And this can never be answered absolutely, but only according to the opinion of society itself. When in the judgment of a civilized state this calamity of war will be more than compensated by the good which through it they may reasonably expect without injustice to attain, there arises what we here call a political necessity for engaging in it. If war is indeed what its consequences can only prove it to be, a mere evil to society, political necessity of course justifies a resort to it.

If apprehension of the consequences of war, which cannot teach us that it is wrong, nor correct the belief that it is the foundation of national glory, could avail to deter a nation from engaging in it, when political necessity seems to justify and demand it, that nation would surely be amenable to the charge of cowardice. A coward is one in whom the fear of the personal dangers and evils of war is strong enough to withstand and overcome the influence of excitement and passion. The higher motives and nobler feelings of our nature are not felt by him at all. A mere animal impulse in his breast is conquered by mere animal fear. But he whom the fear to do wrong sustains and bears triumphant through all influences and temptations to evil is the bravest of mankind. He lives in a higher world, and his conduct is governed by principles above the comprehension of the other. The latter obeys the highest, the former the lowest motives of human action.

We see now that it is vain, and we see why it is vain to attempt by prudential considerations to procure the abandonment of war, because its causes lie in impulses of our nature to



which these cannot furnish any counteracting principle. We see that the attempt would be no more fruitless to stop the torrent of Niagara in the midst of its leap, than to stop the tide of human passion and of human blood by presenting, though it be never so fearful, a picture of its wastefulness and its calamities. And we see, moreover, not only that the consequences of war cannot restrain nations from its practice, but that when a political necessity seems to demand a resort to it, it would be a reproach to humanity if they could.

There remains but one reason which can be urged against the practice of war. This is, that it is in its nature wrong—that for society to take human life, to deprive their fellow men of existence, the gift of their common Creator, over which no dominion is given them, and which they cannot restore, is to invade the prerogative of Deity, is to commit a crime against the laws of God.

This truth, if it be a truth, cannot as we have seen be proven by any argument drawn from the consequences of war. They can only show it to be a political evil. A political evil can be justified by political necessity. A crime



against divine law can be justified only by the necessity of self-preservation.

Is then war a crime? The civilized portion of society regard war as an evil which it is wrong for governments wantonly to incur, which ought if possible to be avoided. But very few view it as a crime. Regarding only its consequences, men generally do not consider it in respect to its nature at all. Is this popular view of war correct, or is it a fearful error?

The divine command, "thou shalt not kill," has been laid upon all mankind. Murder is regarded in a virtuous community with a feeling of horror. Men shrink from contact with the murderer as from pollution. One would smile, should we ask if this feeling was excited by the expense to the county which must attend the trial and execution of the murderer, or even by the suffering his victim might have endured, or the grief and anguish the death might have caused. No, it is the awful nature of the deed itself, the enormity of the crime of wantonly destroying the life of a fellow being that shocks the moral sense of community.

Civilized men admit the righteousness of

this command in its application to individuals, and murder is universally regarded as the most heinous crime which man can commit, or which society is called upon to punish.

Now what is there that can make the same deed only a political evil when committed by community in their collective capacity, which when done by an individual is the highest crime known to human or divine laws? What can so change the nature of this act of taking human life, and make it now justifiable by political necessity, and now only by the necessity of self-preservation? Clearly nothing. There is no difference between the laws of public and private morality. The deed is the same by whomsoever committed. We conclude then that the popular sentiment concerning war is wrong; that it is more than a political evil, that it is murder.

Has then this truth that war is a crime the most dreadful that a nation can commit, has this truth the power, when universally recognized, to banish its practice from among civilized nations? Can the conviction that war is murder counteract those "impulses of nature," passion, pride and the desire for excitement,

and furnish to nations an ever active principle which shall prompt them to revolt at its perpetration? It needs no argument to prove the affirmative of this question. Where war is esteemed to be murder, it will be abhorred as murder.

From this truth, and from this alone, there follow as corollaries that true patriotism never, except as a last resort against intolerable oppression and injury, or in defence of life itself, calls a nation to engage in war, but that on the contrary its voice is obeyed only in cultivating the spirit of fraternity and peace with all mankind; that military renown is not the foundation of national glory; that it is criminal for enlightened states to make war the arbiter of their disputes; that standing armies, except when necessary as a protection against savages or outlaws, are a disgrace to christian governments.

This furnishes us with the true principle by which to determine what that necessity is which will justify a nation in appealing to arms.

The act of taking human life being the same in its nature whether it is called victory or

murder, it follows that the same necessity must be demanded in its justification whether it is committed by individuals or nations.

Existence is the first gift of God to man, and liberty, the great right of responsible beings, is the second and equal one. It is not only the right, it is the highest duty of every man to defend his own life and the lives of others, particularly those of whom he is the natural protector, and if otherwise unable, to take the life of the assailant. So it is the undoubted right and duty of the African to take the life of the slave pirate, if by that means alone he can secure his freedom. And these, imminent danger to his life or his liberty, are the only circumstances which can justify a man in taking the life of his fellow man.

A state is the guardian and protector of its people. It has then the undoubted right, nay, more, it is its most sacred duty to defend its own existence and the lives and liberty of its people against an internal or an external enemy. It defends itself and its citizens by the same right against the murderer, the conspirator and the invader. There is always a wrong, a dreadful wrong attending the act, but it be-

longs not to the injured state, it lies with the aggressor alone.

It may be said that each nation must be the judge in its own case when this justifying necessity arises. We answer very true, and fallible human nature, blinded by a thousand prejudices, must often err in its judgment. But this is no argument against the existence of the right. The same objection would forbid an individual to defend his life. The cause of peace has only one hope. Just in proportion as the moral sense of a nation is cultivated, will that nation be emancipated from the dominion of prejudice and passion, and be fitted rightfully to determine when that dreadful necessity arises in which duty commands an appeal to the God of battles. It is evident that such an extreme necessity could hardly be possible to arise between the United States and any other christian nation.

The doctrine of non-resistance, which asserts that no possible necessity can ever justify war in any people, we think, and we have endeavored in these observations to show to be erroneous. But it is not merely erroneous, it must be productive of unhappy effects upon the



cause of peace. For men can never be persuaded that it is a crime to defend even to the last extremity that government from overthrow which their fathers perchance have reared, and under whose protection they have reposed in security and happiness, their homes from violation, and those whom they hold dear from oppression, slavery and death.

Men can never be persuaded that they commit a crime in fighting for the defence of those objects, for whose safety they are ready to offer up their lives. There is an impulse in every manly heart to be free. Peace, universal peace, can be founded only in its universal triumph. Rather than be enslaved, such a heart will cease to beat. It can never be convinced that when its freedom can be defended only by the death of its oppressor, it has no longer any right to be free.

If this doctrine so abhorrent to humanity shall become associated in the minds of men with the principles of peace, it must retard their progress, and shut multitudes of brave hearts against their reception.

We have now seen that the consequences of war, showing it only to be a political evil, can



never persuade nations to its abandonment; that a conviction that it is murder, a realization of the dreadful nature of the act itself, can alone furnish a motive for its abolishment sufficient to overcome those impulses of our nature which prompt to its continuance, and secure permanent peace among civilized nations.

What then is the work of the peace maker? It is well to present the expense and the suffering occasioned by war. The more enormous its cost, and the greater its injury in every respect to the welfare of nations is shown to be, the more impolitic its practice must be considered, and wars may sometimes be thus averted. But these cannot avail to abolish armies. These can form no foundation on which the civilized world can repose in the security of perpetual peace.

Could a congress of nations, or the insertion of clauses of arbitration in treaties, or any other scheme, if adopted by nations, afford such a foundation? Is it the mission of the peace maker to contrive and labor for the establishment of one or another of these?

We confess we entertain no high opinion of

the utility of any such contrivances. We see very little in them but harmless abstractions, impracticable to be established till the time shall come when they will probably be useless. When christian nations realize what war is, and determine to abandon its practice; when they realize what peace is, and determine to cultivate its spirit and to cherish its blessings, they will readily devise means, if indeed any means shall be necessary, for the attainment and security of the good which they desire, and for the prevention of the wrong which they abhor.

If the principles of peace are to govern the conduct of nations at some future day, the means which statesmen may then think proper to adopt for carrying them into practice are of very little consequence to us now. All that can well be left to those who shall first forever sheath the sword.

And on the other hand, before such a moral revolution shall be effected, though a congress of nations, or some other nicely adjusted plan for the settlement of national disputes should be established, voluntary submission would be very unlikely to follow its decisions. It is more than questionable, whether in the pres-

ent state of society nations would, even in the majority of cases, yield their claims at the bid of an umpire or a tribunal which would have no power of enforcing its judgments.

Peace can find its only security in an exalted moral sense, a hatred of war because it is wrong, a love of peace because its cultivation is right, diffused among nations and throughout all classes of society. Without this, every plan which philanthropic ingenuity can devise will be visionary and vain, valuable and useful without doubt if all men thought and felt as do the theorists who contrived it, but precisely unadapted to society as it is, beautiful perhaps and worthless as the republic of Plato, like a corpse perfect in all its minutest parts, nicely adapted to the purposes for which it is designed, but cold and powerless, unanimated by any informing soul, utterly destitute of the principle of life.

When nations shall show a mutual willingness to disband their armies, actually to put out of their hands the means of injuring each other, then and not till then we may reasonably expect that society will sustain, or more likely find wholly unnecessary, institutions of

peace. But before this time shall arrive a great revolution must be effected in the thoughts and notions of men. Noiseless and unperceived as the flight of the world through space, it will be a gradual awakening to truth, a slow imbibing of the principles of justice and peace, the still-increasing influence of the law of kindness in the study, in the workshop, in the fields, in the schoolhouse, in the place of worship, over all christian lands.

Here lies the work of the peace maker. His is the labor to urge and to guide this deep resistless movement of humanity. It is his mission to proclaim first this great truth, that war is distinguishable only in its enormity from murder. His it is to implant in the hearts of men the deep conviction that war is wrong, that it is the greatest wickedness, the most abominable crime which society can commit, for it is only this truth, realized and felt, that can effect any enduring change in the disposition and conduct of nations.

By these means the moral sense of mankind will become elevated and quickened, and the feeling that the practice of war is disgraceful to human beings will come to take deeper and

deeper hold upon community. As men become more and more alive to the true nature of war, as in the course of time the feeling of horror at its commission shall have become, as it ought to be, equal in degree to that with which murder is regarded in a virtuous community, all minor considerations will be swallowed up, all thought of its consequences will be forgotten, in the sense of the dreadful wickedness inherent in the act itself.

But the apostle of peace has a still higher truth to proclaim than that war is wrong.

There is a deeper and broader foundation still than this, on which the cause of peace is ordained to be established. The truth whose power we have been considering is wholly negative in its character. It can counteract indeed for the most part the influence of the passions in which war has its birth, but it cannot effect their existence, nor wholly destroy their activity.

Man has a higher duty than to abandon war, it is to cherish peace. There is something better than the absence of anger, it is the presence of love. There is a nobler truth than that mankind should be no more enemies, it is that



they are brethren, the work of a common Creator, the partakers of a common humanity, the common possessors of vast capacities and gifted alike with an immortal nature.

The love of all mankind—this indeed can abolish war, for where it exists passion and selfishness and pride must be extinguished. Universal brotherhood—this is the sun of humanity, of freedom, of peace, before whose rising fleets and armies, like morning mists, shall disappear from the face of the earth. Fraternity is the all-embracing principle, whose development shall mark an era in this world's history, when higher and more noble principles of action shall govern the conduct of nations, when the reign of violence shall give place forever to the reign of benevolence and love.

Some philosophers declare that while human nature remains the same, peace among men can never be attained. We admit it. And reasoning from their premises, the melancholy conclusion is inevitable. These bright anticipations can never be realized. Nations will never practically obey the law of kindness. Prophecy is false. War must stain the earth forever.



But they leave out of view an element of human advancement, compared with which all other means for the elevation of man sink to nothing. There is a power which can change human nature. Christianity, whose sublime precepts are in perfect harmony with the principles of our moral being, whose miraculous agency can reach to the impulses of the breast, can calm the passions and subdue the appetites of men, can free the heart from the dominion of selfishness, and establish over it the empire of love, christianity alone can banish from the earth a crime and a curse which is the offspring of passions, and persuade nations to that justice and forgiveness which are the attributes of God.

These observations indicate the true answer to the question, when shall the earth witness the triumph of peace. There will be, doubtless, many efforts made to attain this end before mankind shall be prepared for it. Admirable plans will be devised, not without labor and skill, to bring about what the mass of men do not feel the need of, and to suppress that which they have never realized to be wrong, and over which they do not mourn. Many good men will look upon their own contrivan-

ces, the only difficulty about whose operation is that all men do not feel as they do, as certain to cure, or at least to alleviate, this scourge of humanity.

But the evil lies far beyond the reach of any such machinery. We have seen that the age of peace cannot arrive, except an abhorrence of war as a crime, and a love of all mankind as brethren shall take root in the hearts of men, and grow and increase, until they shall spread over the world their peaceful shade.

To one whose view is bounded by the present hour, the aspect of christendom must appear full of discouragement. Our own nation has recently passed through a causeless war for conquest. Europe is resounding with the din of arms. For more than a year and a half violence and confusion have filled her ancient capitals with consternation. Black, portentous clouds brood over the coming years. Society is like a strange and lonely river, which in the multitude of its windings seems to the disheartened voyager to flow back forever to the spot from whence it came. But he who from some high mountain can trace the stream through the vast landscape, beholds it among

confining rocks and hills steadily pursuing its only course, until its windings ended, its turbulence ceased, in the far distance it emerges into the open plain, and flows majestic to the ocean.

"The age of chivalry," said a great English writer, "has passed, that of speculators and political economists has succeeded, and the glory of Europe has departed forever." He who, unaffected by any such sentimentalism as this, intelligently compares the present with the actual, not the ideal, past, will discover among the nations of christendom a great and wonderful development of mind, and progress in the principles of freedom, justice and peace. He will see that the civilization of the present day possesses far different elements, and a far more exalted character than any which the ancient world ever knew.

He looks back upon the barbarous laws of the nations of Europe in the dark ages, which regarded foreigners as enemies, and gave up to pillage and slavery the stranger cast upon their inhospitable shores. He remembers the hatred and feuds among great subjects of the same states which found vent in perpetual private wars; barons who maintained their state

and retainers by plunder ; kings who, often impotent to protect their subjects from each other, aimed only to compel their servile submission, and to draw from them as from an estate, the greatest possible amount of revenue for their pleasures and of service for their wars ; a church the foundations of whose power were the superstition of its worshippers and the ambition of its priests ; the intrigues and crimes of which every court in Europe was continually the scene ; the lawlessness and strife which filled all lands with violence in those fierce and turbulent times.

He remembers rooted national animosities, handed down for centuries, now becoming forgotten and dead. He looks back on ages of persecution where now toleration reigns, and the faggot and the stake have given place to the peaceful, mighty pen. He reads how the chivalry of Europe marched to conquer and destroy, where he sees the missionary go to teach and to save.

He sees the cold selfish political dogmas and systems of Europe exploded. He beholds the rapid abolishment of all artificial constructions in society and all forms of rank. In the place

of efforts to oppress and degrade, he witnesses exertions to raise up and clothe the toil-worn body of humanity. He sees the press, a power of which "the age of chivalry" never dreamed, diffusing knowledge and truth to the remotest corners of the earth.

He sees communities living in peace and happiness, the sciences and arts which at once enrich, adorn and elevate society, progressing with amazing rapidity, commerce spreading its peaceful wings over the globe and stretching its cords of unity from shore to distant shore, all under just and equal institutions at once their protection and encouragement. He beholds society seeking in its midst and to the ends of the earth objects for its benevolence, and the horrors of war itself mitigated by humane and generous laws.

He searches for the causes of the wars and commotions which are now shaking the states of Europe. It is whole races of earnest, sober men determined to be free, rising to vindicate their great right to think for themselves and to act for themselves. He considers the struggles which men are everywhere making to free themselves from ignorance, that dread-



ful slavery of the soul. He remarks the tendency of the age to recognize the dignity of man as man, the same immortal nature, still high though fallen, the same image of its Maker, majestic though obscured, in every individual that wears the form of humanity.

He sees the principles of peace beginning to receive the serious consideration of men. A year ago a world's convention of the friends of peace assembled at Brussels. Some of the great political minds of Europe took part in its proceedings. The premier of England expressed his warm sympathy with the cause in which they were engaged. The journals of England and the continent, united in expressing the highest respect for its character and its objects. While we write, a similar convention is setting in Paris. A century ago these men, could such men have been found, would have been ridiculed as visionaries. Now all intelligent minds bid them God speed in their glorious work.

All these things must have a cause. The ancient world attained to no such civilization as this. Its civilization was little else than an awakening of the intellect. That of this age



is moreover the exaltation of the nature of man. It is the attainment of higher and juster principles for the government of society, the development of nobler feelings and kindlier sympathies in the hearts of men. To what shall this be ascribed? Christianity, which alone has ever awakened in man the feeling of universal philanthropy, or revealed to him the sublime truth of universal brotherhood, must be regarded as the great element of modern civilization, not only distinguishing it in these respects, but giving to it an ever progressive character, by revealing forever higher ends for human attainment, affording grander objects of thought, a nobler standard and examples of excellence, and more glorious motives for the practice of virtue.

Now in view of these things, we can look toward the future with more than a blind faith. We know that Europe must be emancipated. That the struggle must go on until the men of christendom shall establish forever their independence and equality. Will humanity stop there? No, the work is but half done, until the thoughts of every man among the great nations of the world shall be refined,

liberalized, ennobled by the genius of universal education.

Then will follow peace. Then must be attained this crowning glory of civilization, when armies and navies with all the science and magnificence of this dreadful crime shall follow the spirit of hatred to the tomb.

Freedom and education are the sisters of peace. Daughters of religion, they dwell in an eternal unity.

THE END.











